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Religion in America

The Princeton Religion Research Center

The Princeton Religion Research Center is an interfaith, non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC, founded in 1977, specializes in creative, actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International.

The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the United States and abroad and to explore the factors behind spiritual growth or decline.

It is hoped that this information will contribute to greater understanding and improved relations among the many religions in our pluralistic society.

The PRRC exists solely to provide information that is as accurate as possible on the changing religious scene and does not espouse a particular religion, movement, or cause.

Contents

Page

I. Looking Ahead to the Year 2000
By George H. Gallup, Jr. 3

II. The Princeton Religion Index 14

III. Religious Beliefs
God or Universal Spirit 21
Jesus Christ 23
Afterlife 25

IV. Religious Identification
Religious Preference: Major Faiths 29
Profiles of Major Faiths 31
Protestant and Other Church Preference 33
Religious Preference: Protestant Denominations 34
Profiles of Protestant Denominations 37
Evangelicals 41

V. Religious Practices
Church Membership 43
Church Attendance 45
Alternative Church Attendance 47
Prayer 48
The Bible 50

VI. Religion and Society
Importance of Religion 52
Confidence in Religion 54
Ethics of the Clergy 57
Religion and Today's Problems 58
Influence of Religion 60
Religion Meeting Needs 63
Influence of Religious Values 65

VII. Religion, the Life Cycle, and Youth
Religion and the Life Cycle 68
Teen-Agers 71
College Youth 73

VIII. Methodology
Design of the Sample 78
Sampling Tolerances 79
Gallup Poll Accuracy Record 80

Religion In America 1990

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Note to Reader

The Sample: The procedures followed by The Gallup Organization produce representative samples of the U.S. adult civilian population. Surveys are based either on personal (face-to-face) or telephone interviews. The interviewing mode is indicated on each data table. National survey results usually are based on interviews with 1,000 or more respondents.

Sampling Tolerances: Readers are cautioned that all sample surveys are subject to "sampling error," a statistical estimate of the extent to which the survey results might differ from results that would be obtained by interviewing the entire population in the same way.

The size of the sampling error for each percentage is mainly dependent upon the number of interviews on which the percentage is based. In 95 out of 100 cases, results based on national samples of 1,500 interviews can be expected to vary by no more than 3 percentage points (plus or minus the figure obtained) from the results that would be obtained if every adult in the country were interviewed in the same way. Larger error margins are applicable for results based on smaller national samples or on sub-samples (such as men or women).

Each table shows the number of interviews in each sub-sample to enable readers to determine the appropriate sampling tolerance for percentages based on that sub-sample. Further information on sampling tolerances appears at the end of this report.

In addition to sampling error, readers should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties encountered in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Interviewing Dates: The dates at the top of each table indicate when the interviewing was conducted.

The Sources: The findings are based on special surveys on religion commissioned by the Princeton Religion Research Center and surveys conducted by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

I. Looking Ahead to the Year 2000

By George H. Gallup, Jr.

Looking Ahead to the Year 2000

By George H. Gallup, Jr.

Some observers predict that the world will face as much change in the next ten years as it has in the last three decades. The decade of the 1990s, considered by many social scientists to be the most crucial in the history of civilization, is one with special meaning for Christians. At the end of the decade Christians will celebrate the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Christ. Some ask: "Will there by anything to celebrate?" It is a valid question. At times it appears that we are succumbing to the secular gods of materialism, hedonism, narcissism, relativism, and other "isms," and are drawn to spiritual movements or groups that glorify the self and not God. Sociologist Robert Bellah concluded after a comprehensive survey that Americans have two overriding goals in life: personal success and vivid personal feelings. A recent survey of freshmen at a major eastern university discovered that the three things students most wanted from their education were money, power, and reputation. Has America turned her back on God and chosen her own gods?

This movement toward self-centeredness and self-absorption among Americans is coupled with severe social problems, and give us perhaps a legitimate basis for gloom. We see crime and lawlessness at unprecedented levels. We see a growing American underclass, political apathy, drug and alcohol abuse, and an apparent decline in ethics and morals. One could argue that we live in an addicted society — addicted not only to chemicals, but to possessions, to success, to wealth, and to an easy, self-indulgent lifestyle.

Predictions of the Public

What are the predictions of the American people as they look ahead to the year 2000? Most Americans see a better life for themselves in the 1990s. They expect to spend fewer hours at work, and more with their families. They predict improvements in their finances, careers and general quality of life. Cures are anticipated for AIDS and cancer. Overall, when asked to forecast their personal futures in the year 2000, optimists outnumber pessimists by eight to one.

But these rosy expectations do not extend to society as a whole. Most people are pessimistic that substantial progress will be made during the '90s in solving the country's major domestic problems, including drug abuse, poverty and homelessness. The divorce rate is expected to climb. Six in 10 fear there will be an environmental disaster in the next decade.

While a majority do not foresee an economic calamity such as a worldwide recession, many expect that inflation and unemployment will increase over the next 10 years. Further, most feel that it will become more difficult for people in general to afford a college education, good housing, medical care and dignified retirement.

Role of Surveys

Before examining emerging trends in religion, it might be appropriate to comment on the role of surveys. With the advent of scientific surveys in the mid-1930s, observers of the religious scene gained greater confidence in drawing conclusions about the dynamics of religion in society. Such surveys have added a new dimension to history — a history of what average citizens believe and think.

At the same time it should be borne in mind that the role of leaders — political, religious, or other — is to lead not follow public opinion. Nonetheless, carefully conducted and sensitive surveys help leaders operate on the basis of facts, not assumptions. At both the local and national levels, carefully designed surveys can uncover spiritual and physical needs, and can enhance the dialogue between church leaders and their parishioners.

In view of the fact that the vast majority of the world's populace are "believers," some believe the most profound purpose of scientific surveys is to shed light on the response of humanity to God, to the extent this is possible.

Probing the religious and spiritual lives of Americans is an extraordinarily difficult task — there is no tougher assignment for survey researchers — but there is, many would agree, none more important. And this importance is likely to grow in the decades ahead as religion is increasingly shaped from the "bottom up" rather than the "top down" — from the people in the pews rather than by the church hierarchy.

The goal of survey researchers in religion can be seen as two-fold — to bring valuable information about people's religious beliefs, practices, and knowledge to the attention of religious leaders, educators and others, but also to encourage religious leaders to become research-minded — to become aware of the great potential utility of survey research, as well as its limitations.

While scientific probing of the religious scene through surveys is beginning to catch up with survey research in other areas of life, the clear need at this point is for more

penetrating explorations into the religious life. We now know a great deal about the *breadth* of religion in America, but not about the *depth*. In many respects the inner life is virtually unexplored terrain in terms of empirical studies. Yet religious experiences, whether gradual or sudden, often change the course of people's lives, leading them in a more ethical and positive direction. The importance of exploring these phenomena in terms of improved relationships among people and nations is obvious, since these experiences often carry with them the feeling of unity and love of humankind.

Social scientists and survey researchers have some interesting times ahead as they seek to probe beneath the surface of lives. It has been said that if this century has been devoted to the exploration of *outer* space, the next will be devoted to an exploration of *inner* space.

Religion in the world is shaped not only by the edicts of churches, the pronouncements of theologians, and by the great conclaves of organized religion, but by the responses of millions of people around the globe as they seek to listen and respond to the voice of God. Keith Miller writes: "The most important thing a man has to say is not some speculation about what may be true, but rather a direct and unselfconscious reporting of what has occurred in first-hand experience."

A Look Back

Before we look ahead, it may be useful to set the stage by noting major trends of the past.

The religious liberty clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution — described as perhaps the most important political decision for religious liberty and public justice in the history of humankind — is embodied in just 16 words: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

What has been the effect of this decision? One need only look at the landscape of America to discover the prominence given religion in our nation, and its diversity — nearly 500,000 churches, temples and mosques, of all shapes and sizes dot the landscape. There are no fewer than 2,000 denominations in our nation, not to mention countless independent churches, faith communities, and para-churches. Clearly the way to reach the American people is through their houses of worship — 60% of the populace can be found in faith communities in a given month.

The changes that have occurred in the United States over the last half-century, the period charted by modern scientific surveys of populaces — and the speed with which they have come about — are unprecedented, and have had a powerful impact on the religious life of Americans. The major events of this period that have conditioned religious thought and belief include: the Great Depression of the 1930s, World War II, the post-war economic recovery, the advent of television, the cold war and concern over the internal threat of communism, the Korean War, the Second Vatican Council, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam war, urban riots, campus unrest, Watergate and the resignation of President Richard Nixon, stagflation, environmental and ecological problems, the nuclear threat, the AIDS epidemic, and the drug crisis.

In broad terms, the major perceivable swings in the religious life of the nation were, a post-World War II surge of interest in religion characterized by increased church membership and attendance, a growth in Bible reading, increased giving to churches, and extensive church building. Religious leaders such as Billy Graham, Norman Vincent Peale, and Fulton Sheen had wide followings during this period.

This surge lasted until the late 1950s or early 1960s. Then a decline in religious interest and involvement followed in the 1960s and 1970s. Now, in the 1990s, there appears to be a "bottoming out" in certain indicators, if not a reversal of some of the declines. In addition, surveys indicate a new interest in some respects in spiritual matters.

Despite these ebbs and flows, one of the most remarkable aspects of America's faith is its durability. In the face of all of the dramatic social changes of the past half century — depression, war, the civil rights movement, social unrest, technological change — the religious beliefs and practices of Americans today look very much like those of the 1930s and 1940s.

The percent of the populace who are members and churchgoers today closely matches the figures recorded in the 1930s. One must note, of course, that for certain churches and denominations, these figures are not going in the same direction. Some are up and some are down, but overall, the national figures have not changed since the 1930s and 1940s. This applies to church attendance and also to basic beliefs — belief in God, belief in an afterlife, belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ — although there has even been a slight increase over the last decade in the percentage of people who say they believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ and who say they have made a commitment to Jesus Christ.

Despite this consistent orthodoxy, however, Americans remain highly independent in their religious lives. They are certainly independent of their religious institutions, as we shall explore later in this commentary.

The religious liberty most Americans cherish and celebrate has enabled religion to flourish in many forms, and to become a profound shaper of the American character. Religious liberty has contributed vitality and vigor to the American outlook — an exuberance — a feeling that anything is possible — and often, the courage to bring about difficult but needed change in society as revealed in the high level of volunteerism.

Religion and Volunteerism

Many consider volunteerism, a key trait of America, to be the best hope for the future, and the glue that keeps our society together. A prime motivating factor in volunteerism is the religious spirit. The strength of the nation's social fabric and its quality of life depend on volunteerism in the

public interest. Our surveys report that three times as many participants in churches and synagogues are "very active" in their involvement with civic, social and charitable activities as are non-participants.

Further evidence that the level of contribution of the typical citizen to society is closely related to the intensity of his or her faith is seen from the following: the proportion who fit the category of "highly spiritually committed" are far more involved in charitable activity than their counterparts, as well as more concerned about the betterment of society, more involved in trying to strengthen families, and far happier.

Probably no other institution in our society has had a greater impact for the good than the church. From it have sprung hospitals, nursing homes, universities, schools, child care programs and, of course, concepts of human dignity; and above all, the concept of democracy. If it were not for the church's role in dealing with many of our social ills, the tax burden on the populace would be crushing. To a large extent, our religious institutions do as they say when it comes to helping the needy. A 1990 Gallup survey revealed:

- Seven in ten people contributed money to a charitable organization in the 12-month period prior to the survey, and six in ten gave money to their church that was earmarked for charitable activities. Altogether, 85% of Americans gave money to an organized charity.
- Three quarters (74%) of the public donated food, clothing or other property to an organization that helps needy people.
- Four in ten (42%) adults did unpaid volunteer work during the 12-month test period for a charitable organization. The average volunteer worker contributed six hours of time on unpaid work in the previous month. A large majority of unpaid volunteers (70%) enjoy their work "a great deal."
- Over eight in ten (84%) adults contributed either their time, money, or property to a person in need, without using a charitable organization as an intermediary. About half helped a needy relative, friend or neighbor directly. Over a third helped a homeless person, "street" person, or another needy individual directly.

Religious spirit, as already indicated, apparently motivates much of America's organized charity, since church and synagogue members are the most involved in charitable activity. Almost half the church members did unpaid volunteer work in the 12-month period tested, compared with only a third of non-members. Nine in ten members gave money to a charity, compared with only seven in ten non-members. Eight in ten members gave food, clothing or other property to a charitable organization, compared with two-thirds of non-members. While church and synagogue members are much more involved than non-members in charitable activity through organized groups, they are only slightly more likely than non-members to *personally* help a needy person.

It is clear that the role of religion in the U.S. should never be downplayed. An article in Fortune magazine offers further evidence:

> "Whatever else it is, religion is big business. America has more clergy than Ford and Chrysler together have employees. If U.S. religion were a company it would be No. 5 on the Fortune 500 [list of largest U.S. corporations], its $50 billion of revenues putting it behind IBM and just ahead of GE. Church land and buildings are worth uncounted billions. And God's business is really far bigger than *mammon's* numbers suggest. The figures don't include volunteer work, worth a jaw-dropping $75 billion a year."

A Darker Side

Religion has undergirded our society in remarkable ways, but there is, of course, a darker side, evidenced throughout our history: religious intolerance and bigotry; greed and dishonesty on the part of some religious leaders; and rancor and acrimony among denominations, and perhaps to an even greater extent, *within* denominations.

We shall probably never completely outgrow this rancor and strife among persons of different faiths, yet there may be clear signs that we may, as a nation, be maturing in our respect for religious liberty. Indeed, one of the most dramatic trends in the 55-year history of The Gallup Poll has been the growth in tolerance toward persons of different religions.

A continuing challenge facing persons of all faiths in the decades ahead will be to be steadfast in one's own beliefs, to be faithful — to proclaim what one sincerely believes to be objective truth — but at the same time to be open, civil and loving toward those who do not share one's own religious perspective.

Emerging Trends in Religion

Looking ahead at major trends in religion there is a "good news – bad news" outlook, at least from the standpoint of traditional religion. First, in the matter of beliefs. Virtually all Americans say they believe in God or a universal spirit. Most believe in a personal God who watches over and judges people. Most believe God performs miracles today, and many say they have felt the presence of God at various points in their lives, and that God has a plan for their lives. A substantial majority believe that they will be called before God at Judgement Day to answer for their sins. Americans attest to a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, although what is meant by "divinity" varies. Most believe in an indwelling living Christ, and in the Second Coming. We say we believe in heaven, and to a lesser extent, hell. Half of Americans believe in a personal devil. Also, the vast majority of Americans believe the Bible is either the literal or inspired Word of God. We believe the Ten Commandments to be valid rules for living.

In the area of religious experience, there are some dramatic findings. A remarkable and consistent one-third of Americans have had a profound religious experience, either sudden or gradual, which has been life changing. These occurrences, often conversion experiences, are the focal point in faith development in many cases.

Turning to religious practice, prayer has meaning for Americans. Virtually everyone prays, at least in some fashion. We believe prayers are answered and many can offer

examples. A consistent four in ten Americans attend church or synagogue every week. Seven in ten say they are church members. One-third of Americans watch at least some religious TV each week. The vast majority want religious training for their children. Millions of Americans attend athletic events every year, but many more attend churches and synagogues. Professional sports events gross millions of dollars, but Christians and Jews give billions to their churches as free will gifts.

Organized Religion

Turning now to religion as an institution. Of key institutions that elicit respect in society, the church or organized religion rates near the top and has consistently been in this position since the measurement began 15 years ago. The clergy are held in high esteem and, with doctors, are seen as the occupation having the highest prestige. Generally speaking, the clergy receive good marks from the public for the way they are dealing with the needs of their parishioners and the problems of their communities.

In terms of religious identification, fewer than one person in ten indicates that he or she has no religious preference. In fact, only four in 100 Americans are completely non-religious, that is, have no religious preference, say religion is not important in their lives, are not members of a church, and do not attend religious services. Only three out of every 100 Americans say their lives have not been touched at all by Jesus Christ, either in a supernatural sense or in the sense of Jesus being an ethical or moral influence on their lives.

Three-fourths of Americans say that religion is currently very important or was at some earlier point in their lives. Fifty-six percent of Americans are churched. These are people who are members of a church or have attended services in the previous six months other than for special religious holidays. Most of those who are unchurched are so for practical, not theological reasons. It is not a matter of belief versus non-belief: many believers are among the unchurched. The churched and the unchurched are in a constant state of flux: many people in churches are about to leave, but there are also many people outside the churches about to join. Half of the currently unchurched say there is a good chance that they can be brought back into the community of active worshippers.

Americans give most of their monetary contributions to religious institutions, organizations, or causes. Religion, as noted, is the prime motivating factor in the high level of volunteerism in the United States. A solid and consistent majority of Americans believe that religion can answer the problems of the world.

Broad But Not Deep

We have touched on some of the remarkable ways religion has shaped and is shaping America in distinctly positive terms. Let's now dig a little deeper. When we use measurements to probe the depth of religious conviction, we become less impressed with the sincerity of our faith. We believe in God, but this God is often only an affirming one, not a demanding one; He does not command our total allegiance — we often place other gods before Him.

We pray but often in a desultory fashion, with the emphasis on asking, or petition, not on thanksgiving, adoration, intercession for others, or forgiveness. These findings are disturbing because prayer is certainly the starting point for renewal and a deeper life of faith. Americans need to learn how to pray.

We revere the Bible, but we don't read it, observes syndicted columnist, Jim Castelli. The proof is the sorry state of biblical knowledge among Americans — we are truly "biblical illiterates." This is a worrisome state of affairs, not only because the Bible is the source of our laws, as well as our sense of justice and compassion, but because the Bible is a guide for many on how they should live their lives.

Religious ignorance extends to a lack of awareness and understanding of one's own religious traditions and of the central doctrines of one's faith. The result is that large numbers of Americans are unrooted in their faith and therefore easy prey for movements that glorify the self and not God. We pick and choose those beliefs and practices that are most comfortable and least demanding. Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby calls this "religion *a la carte*."

We want the fruits of faith, but not the obligations. Religion is important in the lives of Americans, but it doesn't have primacy. Of 19 social values, "following God's will" is far down the list among the public's choices as the "most important," behind happiness and satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment and five other values. Of eight important traits, teen-agers rate "religious faith" as least important, behind patience, hard work, and five other traits.

Church involvement alone does not seem to make a great deal of difference in the way we live our lives. The churched are just as likely as the unchurched, for example, to engage in unethical behavior. It is at the level of deep religious commitment where we find extraordinary differences — in outlook, in charitable activity, in happiness, and in other ways. The highly committed segment of the populace — the "hidden saints," if you will — account for only a very small percentage of the population, but their influence is far out of proportion to their numbers.

Dramatic evidence that religious commitment may be broad but not deep is seen in surveys conducted by researcher George Barna, who estimates that less than 5% of Christians are not entangled in the deceits of materialism, secular humanism, and hedonism. Barna reports in *Vital Signs* that among those who profess to be Christians:

- Two in five deny that pain and suffering are a means of being a better person.
- Three in 10 say nothing is more important than having fun and being happy.
- Two in five say it's okay to do anything as long as you don't hurt others.

Educator Peter Haile notes certain myths that seem to be taking hold among the young population today:

- The myth that all that life calls us to is the heedless pursuit of pleasurable experiences.

- The myth that money is everything and that the end justifies the means.
- The myth that there are no moral consequences to our actions and words.
- The myth that our religious life is one thing and the way we behave is another.

Five Gaps

The religious condition of Americans today can perhaps be best described in terms of gaps: first, the obvious gap in our vertical relationship with God, and second, the gap between humans, the horizontal relationship. Separateness is surely a basic evil in our society. The rich and the poor, for example, rarely interact with each other in a deep and meaningful way. We give to charities, but do we give of ourselves? Surely, our record in volunteerism is spectacular, but how many Americans have a personal relationship with somebody who is impoverished? I suspect not many.

There is also an ethics gap — the difference between the way we think of ourselves and the way we actually are. While religion is highly popular in this country, survey evidence suggests that it is often superficial — it does not change people's lives to the degree one would expect from the level of professed faith. There is also a knowledge gap — the gap between Americans' stated faith and their lack of the most basic knowledge about that faith. If half of persons who say they are Christians do not know who delivered the Sermon on the Mount, one can assume that they are not going to be able to give meaningful responses to questions about basic Christian doctrines such as grace, redemption, and atonement.

Finally, there is a gap, a growing one, between believers and belongers. A decoupling of belief and practice, if you will. Millions of Christians are believers, many devout, but they do not participate in the congregational lives of their denominations. Americans increasingly view their faith as a matter between them and God, to be aided but not necessarily influenced by religious institutions.

One major impact of the "decoupling" of faith and church in America has been the growth of the religiously unaffiliated and the unchurched. The latter group includes many who claim denominational membership but rarely if ever go to church. The religiously unaffiliated are "the fastest-growing religious group in the country," according to Dean Hoge, a sociologist at the Catholic University of America.

The decoupling of faith and church stems in considerable measure from what has been called privatism, or "radical individualism," dramatically represented in these specific beliefs:

- The vast majority of Americans believe it is possible to be a good Christian or Jew without going to church or synagogue.
- A similar majority believe that people should arrive at their religious beliefs independently of any church or synagogue.
- A majority agree that it does not make any difference which church a person attends because one is as good as another.
- Americans are evenly divided on the statement, "I don't have to belong to an organized religion because I lead a good life."
- An overwhelming majority of Americans believe that their faith is strengthened by being constantly challenged.
- Americans say they rely on themselves, not an outside power such as God, to solve their problems.
- Fewer than half of Americans agree "completely" that there are clear standards which never change for judging good and evil.

There is one other significant dimension to Americans' religious independence: Over the past decade or more, a consistent one-third of the American people have reported having had a "religious experience," or "a moment of religious insight or awakening that changed the direction of my life." This finding, that one in three Americans has had such a breakthrough experience, is one of the most significant survey results ever uncovered. Perhaps part of the reason that experiences of this sort have not received the attention they deserve is the belief by some that one can reach God only through intense mental effort, through a gigantic intellectual struggle. But if that were the case, Christianity, for example, would have died out in the first or second century.

The trend toward the privatization of faith may be part of a larger phenomenon. Writing in *The Public Perspective* (May/June 1990) Norval D. Glenn, professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin, notes:

> "The tendency of Americans to withdraw their allegiance from social institutions, social groupings — anything outside of themselves — is a unifying theme across much othewise disparate social change. In other words, a 'master trend' involves a shift away from communalism and toward individualism. This withdrawal of allegiance has not been anywhere nearly complete, and there have been countertrends in parts of the population, and in the total population for short periods of time. Nonetheless, a variety of questions repeated in surveys at intervals over the past few decades point to a net decline in identification with such entities as the nation, churches, parties, local communities, and families. There is also some evidence that perceived self-interest has gained at the expense of group loyalties in shaping individuals' decisions."

Americans have traditionally held an independent attitude toward religion, but Gallup surveys conducted over the past few years reveal a trend toward an increased "decoupling" of faith and church.

Americans today have less confidence in and more complaints about organized religion than in the recent past. At the same time, however, there has been no decrease in the level of basic religious belief or commitment. In fact, on some measures, Americans seem to be more religious than in the past.

This trend suggests that "we may be experiencing a great leap forward in the privatization of faith," says Jeffrey Hadden, a professor of sociology at the University of Virginia and co-author of two books on religious television.

The increased decoupling of faith and church has serious implications for organized religion. It can hurt the

church's ability to raise funds, recruit staff and volunteers and influence public policy, according to William McCready, Associate Director of the Public Opinion Laboratory at Northern Illinois University. Furthermore, some observers fear, this decoupling of faith and church can lead to relativism and "feel good religion," as people set their own rules.

The increased "decoupling" of faith and church that has emerged over the past few years is sending shock waves throughout American Protestantism. The trend may be contributing to developments as diverse as increased tensions within denominations and as the weakening of the black church, historically a key institution in the black community.

In the American Catholic community, the "decoupling" of faith and church is being played out primarily through the disaffection of two groups — upper-income, college-educated Catholics and lower-income Hispanics.

In the case of the former group, there is increased tension between a pope intent on tightening his control over his flock, and an affluent, educated laity intent on making their own decisions about moral and social issues. A 1987 Gallup survey, for example, found that 77% of American Catholics said they were more likely to follow their own conscience in making moral decisions, while only 14% said they would follow the pope.

Impact of Changing Demographics

In the 1990s America's faith should hold steady, while the institutional church may possibly waiver, and the people in the pews will be a more diverse mix than was the case in the past.

Changing demographics — including immigration and growing minority group populations — are altering the face of American religion.

Over the next decade, America probably will become more religiously pluralistic and less Protestant in character than it is today. Trends point to a growth among Catholics, Mormons, those who practice non-Western religions and those who claim no religious affiliation, and to continued decreases among most "mainline" Protestants.

A religious group can grow in only two ways. First, it must retain those members born into the faith. Second, it must attract converts through individual evangelization or, as is often the case, through marriage.

One way to estimate the future growth of any group is to look at how well it is doing in retaining young members and how active it is in evangelizing others. The following table compares denominations on two key measures. The first is the percentage who give a particular denominational preference who are under 30; nationally, 27% of the adult population is under 30. The second figure is the percentage of those who said in a 1988 survey that they were invited to join a church within the past year, citing each denomination. (Catholics are included in the "other" category; 6% of those invited to join a church said they were invited by members of "other" churches.)

	Percent under 30 (based on religious preference)	Percent cited by invitees
Baptist	28	19
Methodist	19	4
Lutheran	17	2
Presbyterian	17	2
Episcopalian	17	–
United Church of Christ	14	1
Other Protestant	26	44
Mormon	31	6
Catholic	31	–
Jews	19	–
No affiliation	38	–
Evangelical	26	NA

Groups with the largest proportion of adherents under 30 and the strongest track record on evangelization have the best chance of increasing their share of the population. Those with the smallest proportion of adherents under 30 and the weakest evangelization efforts stand to decrease their share of the population. These figures suggest certain trends for each denomination:

Catholics: While Catholics score low on evangelization, they have a significant proportion of persons under 30. This, combined with the expected increase in immigration by Hispanics, who are predominately Catholic, indicates that Catholics are likely to continue increasing their proportion of the population. Today, 28% of Americans are Catholic.

Baptists: The percentage of Baptists under 30 is one percentage point higher than the national average, and Baptists rank high in evangelization efforts. These factors indicate that they are likely to increase their proportion of the population. Twenty percent of Americans are Baptists today.

Mormons: The proportion of Mormons under 30 is above the national average, and Mormons rank high on evangelization; they, too, are likely to increase their share of the population. Two percent of Americans are Mormons today.

The Unaffiliated: The proportion of those with no religious affiliation who are under 30 is substantially higher than the national average, but the unaffiliated do not "evangelize." While some in this group will re-affiliate with a church as they grow older, the religiously unaffiliated have steadily increased as a proportion of the population and are likely to continue to do so. Ten percent of Americans have no religious affiliation today.

Evangelicals: Evangelicals, those who describe themselves as "Born-Again Christians," are just about at the national average in the share of adherents under 30. While our

survey question about invitations to join a church did not ask about evangelicals by name, they are, by definition, evangelizers. About two-thirds of Baptists are evangelicals, as are most of those in the "other Protestant" group noted for its very high degree of evangelization. Today, about one American in three is an Evangelical, and this group is likely to increase its representation in the general population.

Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, United Church of Christ: These mainline Protestant denominations share the same patterns; the proportion of their members under-30 is well below the national average and they are virtually invisible when it comes to evangelization. They are very likely to continue to decline as a proportion of the population. The mainline churches' best hope of a revival is the return of young former adherents who now claim no religious affiliation.

Jews: Jews do not evangelize as such, and they rank below the national average in under-30 affiliation: they, too, are likely to decrease their proportion in the general population.

Non-Western Religions: The number of Americans who belong to non-Western religions, including Islam and Buddhism, is extremely low today, perhaps less than 1 percent of the population. But this population is growing, particularly with the increase in immigration from Southeast Asia, and may be more visible over the next decade.

This, then, is the shape of America's faith in the '90s: Faith will hold steady, the institutional church will be not quite so firm, and the population will be more pluralistic than it is today. And, Americans will continue to be unique with an unmatched combination of high levels of education and high levels of religious belief and activity.

Major Challenges Ahead

Few will dispute the fact that the 1990s will be a period of severe testing for the churches of America, as they seek to relate to a populace that is increasingly drawn to spirituality, but less enthusiastic about organized religion, which they often find to be irrelevant, unfulfilling, and boring.

Of particular concern to the traditional churches is the growing interest among the populace in paranormal, psychic, ghostly and otherworldly experiences, and their susceptibility to movements such as New Age, which traditionalists believe leads to a worship of self rather than God.

In *Understanding the New Age*, Los Angeles Times religion editor Russell Chandler writes: ". . . the insidious danger of the New Age is its view of the nature of reality, which admits to no absolutes. History provides evidence that relative standards of morality breed chaos and — ultimately — the downfall of society." A new Gallup survey shows that belief in many paranormal and psychic experiences is just as widespread among Americans who are deeply religious in a traditional sense as those who are not.

The question facing traditional churches is: are members rooted enough in the beliefs and traditions of their own churches to distinguish them from competing beliefs? The answer would seem to be, many are not.

But Great Opportunity

While the challenges are great, church leaders need not be discouraged about the prospects for broadening and deepening religion in America. There are hopeful ways to close the ethics, knowledge, belief and belonging gaps, and to deepen faith, and to turn attested beliefs into true belief, which has been described as "belief acted upon."

One can gain encouragement from two basic underlying trends: — growing evidence that Americans are searching for deeper spiritual moorings today with a new intensity — Journalist Bill Moyers recently told the Religious Communications Congress in Nashville that "the search for what it means to be spiritual is the story of the century" — and indications that people, perhaps as an antidote to "radical individualism" are searching for deeper relationships with each other. Furthermore, levels of stated belief are high. But action is called for — large numbers of Americans appear to be floundering in their religious lives, and drifting further toward self-centeredness.

The prospects for reaching the unchurched right now are good as determined by a major survey conducted by The Gallup Organization, *The Unchurched American, 1988 for Congress 88, A National Festival of Evangelism*, as seen in the following findings:

1. The unchurched today are, by many measures, more religious than they were a decade earlier (when Gallup did a similar study).

2. The unchurched have a "significant degree" of traditional religious belief, with only 18% claiming no religious affiliation and 63% believing the Bible to be either the literal or inspired word of God.

3. Fifty-eight percent of the unchurched said they would "definitely," "probably," or "possibly," return to church, up from 52% in 1978.

4. Sixty-eight percent of the unchurched — along with 85% of the churched — said they would invite others to join their denomination.

5. The percentage of children receiving religious training shows a slight upward trend. This fact should contribute to church growth since religious training in youth is related to a person's being churched as an adult.

6. Many reasons for being unchurched are practical and apparently could be addressed relatively easily. Half of those who left church after moving, for example, said they never got around to looking for a new church. An intensified invitation program should yield positive results.

Closing the Gaps

In view of survey findings indicating a lack of depth of religious conviction, what steps need to be considered as ways to close the gaps described?

1. *Encourage a deeper prayer life*. This is surely the starting point for renewal in personal lives and in the church as a whole. Various forms of prayers can be explored and encouraged — personal prayer, prayer groups, prayer partners, prayer vigils, and the like. Many would agree that prayer should be at the center of church life, with all decisions based on intense prayer. Prayerful, purposeful planning is called for as we seek to face the challenges of the 1990s.

2. *Clearer presentations in faith communities of the supernatural basis of our beliefs, and insistence on objective truth, while avoiding dogmatism*. Without transcendant values, America is in danger of losing its distinctive power and its direction. For Christians, this means clear and compelling presentations of the gospel of Jesus Christ, presentations that reach the heart as well as the mind.

3. *Close and careful attention to people's religious and spiritual experiences*. Too often these are dismissed by religious leaders as emotionalism or auto-suggestion. For many these experiences are "God-incidents," and in some cases have changed the course of their lives. Some studies, for example, indicate that the majority of alcoholics start on the road to recovery not through some intellectual process, but through a change of heart or conversion — surrendering oneself to God.

From a practical standpoint it is also important to note that some studies have shown that those who say they have had profound religious experiences (sudden or gradual) are often in the vanguard of their local church's mission, and are the most active and motivated among the membership.

A key reason given by the unchurched as one that could cause them to return to church is finding a pastor who will listen to their spiritual journeys.

4. *Re-examine the status of religious education in this nation*. Judging by the product, religion education has failed rather badly. Most Americans agree that the home is the best place to teach religion, but large majorities also favor activities in the public school setting that are permissable under the First Amendment: public schools offering a variety of religious studies such as elective Bible courses, and study of Bible in literature, history, social studies and comparative religion. A large majority also favors making school facilities available for use by student religious groups during non-school hours.

We need to seek out the best educators, urge that standards be set, and explore new ideas to foster religious education.

5. *Encourage an active program of evangelization (after due preparation)*. Invitation is a step that can be taken immediately — a high percentage of people say they started going to a church simply because they had been invited to do so. This may be probably the most effective way to bring about growth in a faith community, assuming there is an active follow-up program.

Religion in American Life (RIAL) and The Advertising Council recently unveiled an unprecedented volunteer grassroots movement that brings together congregations within the Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, and other religious traditions in an effort to increase the number of Americans actively engaged in worship, education, and community service through local congregations.

Titled "INVITE A FRIEND," the project combines, to date, the energies of a potential 56 million members of 22 currently participating religious groups with the national resources of the advertising and media industries. It is hoped that more than 100 million volunteers in 300,000 congregations will become involved in the project's outreach activities. The project's ten year goal is to increase participation in worship, education, and community service through local congregations by 40%, bringing the total number of people in U.S. congregations to 200 million by the year 2000.

6. *Encourage the development of small groups*. Americans are among the loneliest people in the world, a world becoming increasingly impersonal as we see the growth of megacities around the globe. In reaction, people are trying to rediscover each other, to bond, to reach out to others. In the religious world, this often takes the form of small groups that meet for prayer or Bible study. Some observers feel that there is no more important trend in the religious life of Americans than small groups. Most in need of such groups, one might argue, are persons in the professions — doctors, lawyers, and others — persons who make difficult decisions, often life and death decisions.

Small groups can meet the need to:

- Become open and vulnerable to each other, to become healed.
- Deepen one's prayer life.
- Study Scriptures and to bring the Bible into one's daily life in a meaningful way.
- Test one's faith and to gain insight into such basic questions as: What is my relationship with God? And for Christians: Who is Jesus Christ and what does He mean to me?
- Learn how to share one's faith with others in the group.
- Become equipped to reach out to others outside the group and share one's faith.
- Become empowered for social service and outreach.

Small groups can serve both as an entrance to the church community and as a support group for those who find the church setting too impersonal. In a very real sense, small groups are the future of the church.

7. *Give careful attention to the needs and desire of the laity for greater leadership roles*. One such role could be in the area of church administration, freeing the clergy to provide pastoral counseling, an activity that would cause many unchurched to return to church.

In a special survey conducted for *The People's Religion* (by George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli), survey respondents were asked: "Who do you think should have greater influence in determining the future of religion in America: the clergy, or the people who attend services?" By a 6-to-1 margin, Americans said the laity, the people who attend religious services, should have greater influ-

ence. Six in 10 (61%) held this view, while one in 10 (12%) said the clergy should have greater influence. Another 2 in 10 (22%) volunteered the response that both should play an equal role in determining the future of religion.

These findings show overwhelming support for a greater lay role in church leadership in the coming decade. Indeed, the 1990s could be appropriately labelled, "The Decade of the Laity." Support is strong across the board, but it was particularly strong among several key groups. For example, among young adults, those 18 to 29, 70% supported greater influence for the laity, while only 9% supported greater influence for the clergy. At the same time, 65% of college graduates supported greater influence for the laity, while only 10% supported a greater role for the clergy. Clearly for young and well-educated Americans, increased lay influence is a key to greater involvement. Churches, synagogues, and mosques need to heed this finding carefully if they wish to keep young members in the fold. Indeed, if church leaders are not sensitive to the growing demands of the laity to have a role in leadership, organized religion could show further signs of slippage in the years ahead.

Special attention should also be given by mainline churches to persons in the 18-29 age group, because the percentage of those in this age group who are affiliated with mainline denominations is well below the national average. This fact, combined with a lack of evangelization among those denominations, points to continuing decline in these churches in the next decade (at least on the basis of these two facts).

The loss of representation of the 18-to-29 age group could be felt particularly keenly toward the end of the 1990s, called the "decade of evangelism" by many churches, as this group enters their thirties, one of the most active age groups in churches. Clearly, future decline or growth in organized religion depends on the success of churches in responding to the insistence of young and well-educated Americans for greater involvement in their churches.

Assess and Respond to the Needs of People

Americans want a wide variety of services, both spiritual and practical from their churches and synagogues. And whether Americans feel they are getting those services is, all in all, a more important factor in determining whether or not they will attend church than are larger philosophic questions. In fact, only a minority of those who are unchurched — who rarely, if ever, attend services — stay away because of differences in doctrine and philosophy.

One thing that Americans want from their churches is a sense of community. Our surveys show that as many as four in ten Americans admit to frequent or occasional feelings of intense loneliness. The church is a major institution that provides a sense of fellowship and belonging.

One dimension of this need for community is the desire for a church life that supports and provides help for families. Most churches are family oriented, but there is a negative side to this — one reason many singles, especially young people, stay away from church is that they feel they are not wanted because they are not part of a family.

A key element in whether people feel welcome in a church community is the behavior of the pastor. Almost one in five among the unchurched cites a bad experience with a pastor as a major reason for no longer attending church.

The spiritual dimension Americans want includes helping them to find meaning in their lives and, for Christians, to deepen their relationships to Jesus Christ. It also includes a strong desire for information about the Bible and its meaning. While Americans want spirituality from their churches, they also want practical help. They also want their churches to help them learn how to put their faith into practice; to shed light on the important moral issues of the day; to help them learn how to serve others better and to be better parents. Americans understand that for their faith to be meaningful, it must be real and have a real impact on their day-to-day lives.

The desire of one American in three for church help in learning how to be parents highlights the degree to which church is a family affair. Large numbers of young adults who have stayed away from the church for a number of years return to the church when their children are old enough to begin religious instruction.

The desire for practical help extends to the desire for the church to respond to social justice needs. It has become accepted in many quarters that Americans don't want their churches involved in such issues, but that is not the case. A plurality of Americans today believe organized religion is not concerned enough about social issues. Americans don't want their churches to become so involved in social justice issues that they lose sight of spirituality — but they don't want them to lose sight of the need to address justice issues either. The public seeks both inner and social renewal.

Agenda for the 1990s

What is the agenda for the '90s? *Christianity Today* cites four strategies for Christians for work and witness. First, "the Church must capture its zeal for sharing its faith and hope — the good news of God's redemptive love in Christ, whether it be through neighborhood evangelism or global missions." Secondly, "the Church of the '90s should find itself in a position to reclaim a long tradition of providing refuge to the needy and oppressed." Third, "and very importantly, we need to recover our identity as a 'peculiar people.' That means resisting the currents of a culture that still drifts toward materialism, secularism, and fuzzy New Age-ism. We need to be more diligent in helping our young people build a moral framework." Fourth, "prayer — heartfelt, urgent, and constant — will be crucial as we meet challenges we may not have yet envisioned. God's unchanging resources in His Spirit, mediated to us through the personal and corporate practice of prayer, worship, and Bible study, will enable us to meet the coming decade head on — no matter what stresses and opportunities it may hold."

Thanks to the unprecedented level of freedom in the United States, Americans are able to make choices about their future. These choices, many believe, apply most deeply at the religious level: Will we choose the living God or will we choose the substitute gods of the modern age — money, possessions, fame, drugs, a self-indulgent lifestyle? Will our religion be God-given or man-made? The Reverend Peter Moore, an Episicopal priest, writes in his new book, *Disarming the Secular Gods*, "We have no significance, health, or happiness, save that which comes when we surrender the allusion of being the center of the universe and joyfully celebrate God as that center."

Dr. Harold Lindsell in *The New Paganism* writes, "The world still waits to see what God can do through men and women who are wholly yielded to him. What needs to be done can be done and will be done if the people of God set themselves to do it."

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II. The Princeton Religion Index

The Princeton Religion Index

The Princeton Religion Index is the composite average of eight fundamental measurements of religious behavior and opinion that have been taken over the years by The Princeton Religion Research Center and The Gallup Organization. The Index provides the means for tracking the broad movements of religion in America over recent years and through the decades, and it also can serve as a bench mark when comparing the findings for individual years or specific measurements.

The Index combines religion factors that have been remarkably constant over the years with those that can change with volatile speed in reaction to events in both the religious and secular worlds.

The Constants

Belief in God, religious identity, a sense of belonging and worshipping together, and the importance of religion in one's life are qualities that change very slowly in our society. Shifts in these variables become noticeable only when measured by decades, rather than by year-to-year analyses. Their very constancy may help to explain why religion is often so very important to the sense of community and shared experiences in American life.

1. **Belief in God.** Belief in God or a universal spirit of course is the *sine qua non* of all religious experience. Such beliefs are almost a universal experience for Americans, with positive responses over the past five decades ranging from 94% to 99% of the population.

2. **Religious preference.** Since this question was first asked by Gallup in 1947, nine Americans in 10, or more, have stated a religion or denomination that is their preferred form of belief. In the past decade, those having a preference has ranged from 90% to 93% of those interviewed. Conversely, it can be said that less than one person in ten claims neither formal nor informal religious affiliation.

3. **Religious membership.** Gallup has been questioning people about membership in a church, synagogue, or similar place of worship, since 1937. In that period, claims of membership have ranged from a high of 76% in 1947 to a low of 65% in 1988. Note that these are claims of membership and may, and usually do, include people who may not appear on the active rolls of local houses of worship; i.e., the responses include people who feel they are members of a given church or synagogue even if they do not always meet the local formal membership requirements.

4. **Worship service attendance.** Gallup has questioned people since 1939 about their attendance at church or synagogue in the seven-day period preceding the time of interview. Although some variation is noted in earlier periods, with reports of attendance ranging from a high of 49% to a low of 37%, in the past 10 years the average attendance has shown little fluctuation.

5. **Importance of religion.** A majority of Americans in the past 10 years have rated religion as being very important in their lives (53% to 56%). Occasional measurements on the same question in earlier decades indicated that the sense of importance probably was stronger in earlier times.

The Variables

Church and clergy can be viewed as being only temporal when on occasion they are viewed as failing when they strive to meet the challenges of contemporary life.

6. **Ability of religion to answer today's problems.** In 1957, 81% of the people interviewed by Gallup believed that "religion can answer all or most of today's problems." By 1984, the American public's confidence in religion's ability to deal with contemporary issues fell to a low of 56%. This is by far the most volatile of the factors included in the Princeton Religion Index, with swings of four or five percentage points from year to year being the rule rather than the exception.

7. **Confidence in the Church.** The confidence that institutions such as the church or "organized religion" enjoy may often appear to be a constant, but when the calm is destroyed, as in the recent TV evangelist scandals, the repercussions can be drastic. In just four years, the proportion of people saying they had a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the church or organized religion dropped from 66% in 1985 to only 52% in 1989.

8. **Confidence in the Clergy.** Similarly, members of the clergy are not immune to public opinion, as positive ratings of their honesty and ethics dropped from 67% to 55% between 1985 and 1989.

The Princeton Religion Index

The Princeton Religion Index is a compilation by the Princeton Religion Research Center of eight leading indicators.

A perfect index score of 100.0 would be achieved only when *all* people interviewed:

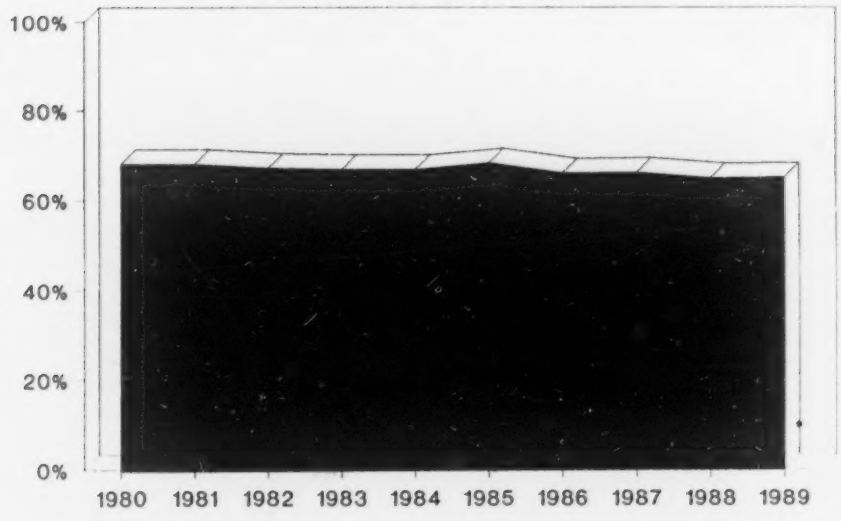
- Believed in God
- Had a stated religious preference
- Were members of a church
- Attended religious services in the past seven days
- Consider religion very important in their lives
- Believe religion provides answers to today's problems
- Have high confidence in organized religion
- Have high confidence in the clergy.

The index indicates the degree to which these goals have been met in the past.

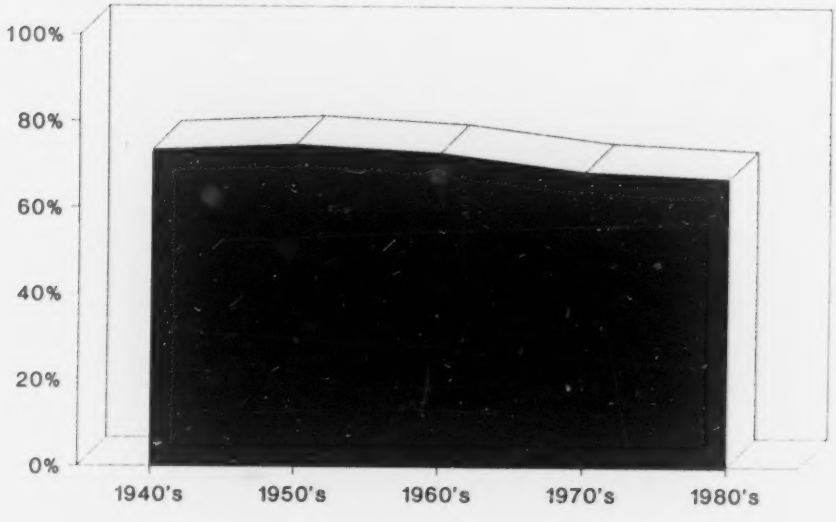
	Index score
1990 (preliminary)	65.4
1989	65.1
1988	65.0
1987	66.2
1986	66.1
1985	68.4
1984	66.9
1983	66.9
1982	67.2
1981	68.1
1980	68.1
1970s	68.4
1960s	72.7
1950s	74.6
1940s	73.3

NOTE: Scores earlier than 1980 are statistical estimates made from existing scattered data.

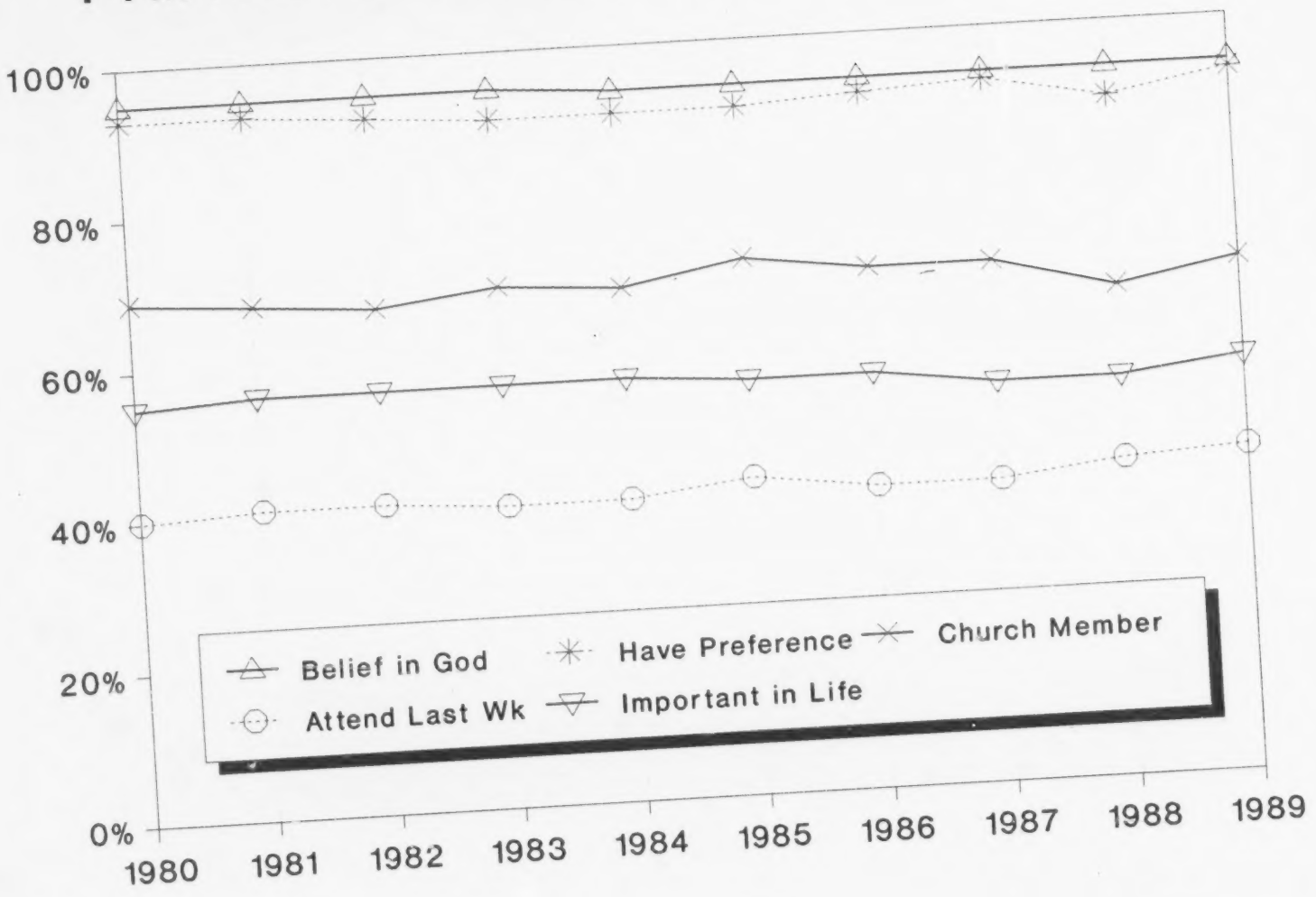
PRINCETON RELIGION INDEX
1980's COMPOSITE AVERAGE



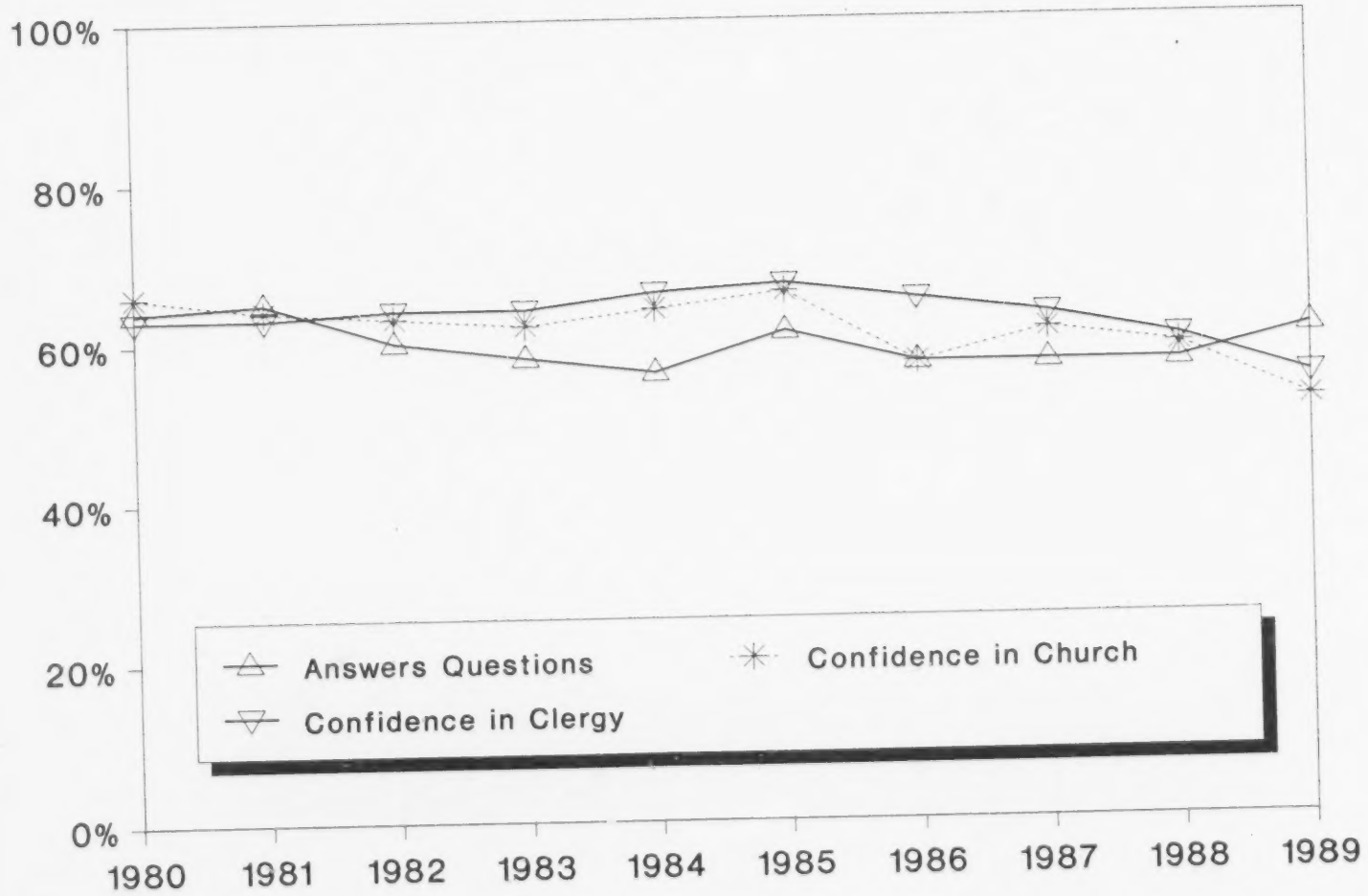
COMPOSITE AVERAGE 1940 - 1989



PRINCETON RELIGION INDEX - 1980's



PRINCETON RELIGION INDEX - 1980's



III. Religious Beliefs

God or Universal Spirit
Jesus Christ
Afterlife

God or Universal Spirit

94% of Americans Believe in God

The vast majority of Americans believe in God or a universal spirit, the proportion having remained remarkably constant during nearly four decades of scientific polling.

Here is the trend, showing little statistical change in the proportion of American adults who believe in God or a universal spirit:

Belief in God or a Universal Spirit

1986	94%[1]
1981	95[2]
1976	94
1975	94
1969	98
1967	97
1965	97[3]
1959	97[4]
1954	96
1953	98
1952	99[5]
1947	94
1944	96

[1]Survey conducted for The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc. by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

[2]Survey conducted by Gallup International Research Institutes (GIRI) for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), and The European Value Systems Study Group.

[3]Survey conducted for *The Catholic Digest* by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

[4]Survey conducted for *Look* magazine by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

[5]Survey conducted for *The Catholic Digest* by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

Very few people view God either as an abstract idea (5%) or as an impersonal creator (2%). Far more view God as the heavenly Father of the Bible who can be reached by prayers (84%). Only 4% of those who believe in God will not venture an opinion as to the nature of his being.

Beliefs about God

Heavenly Father, who can be reached by prayers	84%
Idea, not a being	5
Impersonal creator	2
Don't know	4
Do not believe in a God or universal spirit	5
TOTAL	100%

The majority of Americans in a 1988 survey said they firmly believe that they will be called before God at judgment day to answer for their sins. An additional 28% said they mostly agreed this would happen. Among the remaining 20%, 8% mostly disagreed and 6% completely disagreed there would be a day of judgment, and 6% held no opinion.

Protestants (60%), particularly Evangelicals (78%), were the most likely to be completely convinced that they will be called to judgment. Less likely to anticipate such judgement are Roman Catholics (49%) and non-Evangelical Protestants (45%).

The Last Judgment

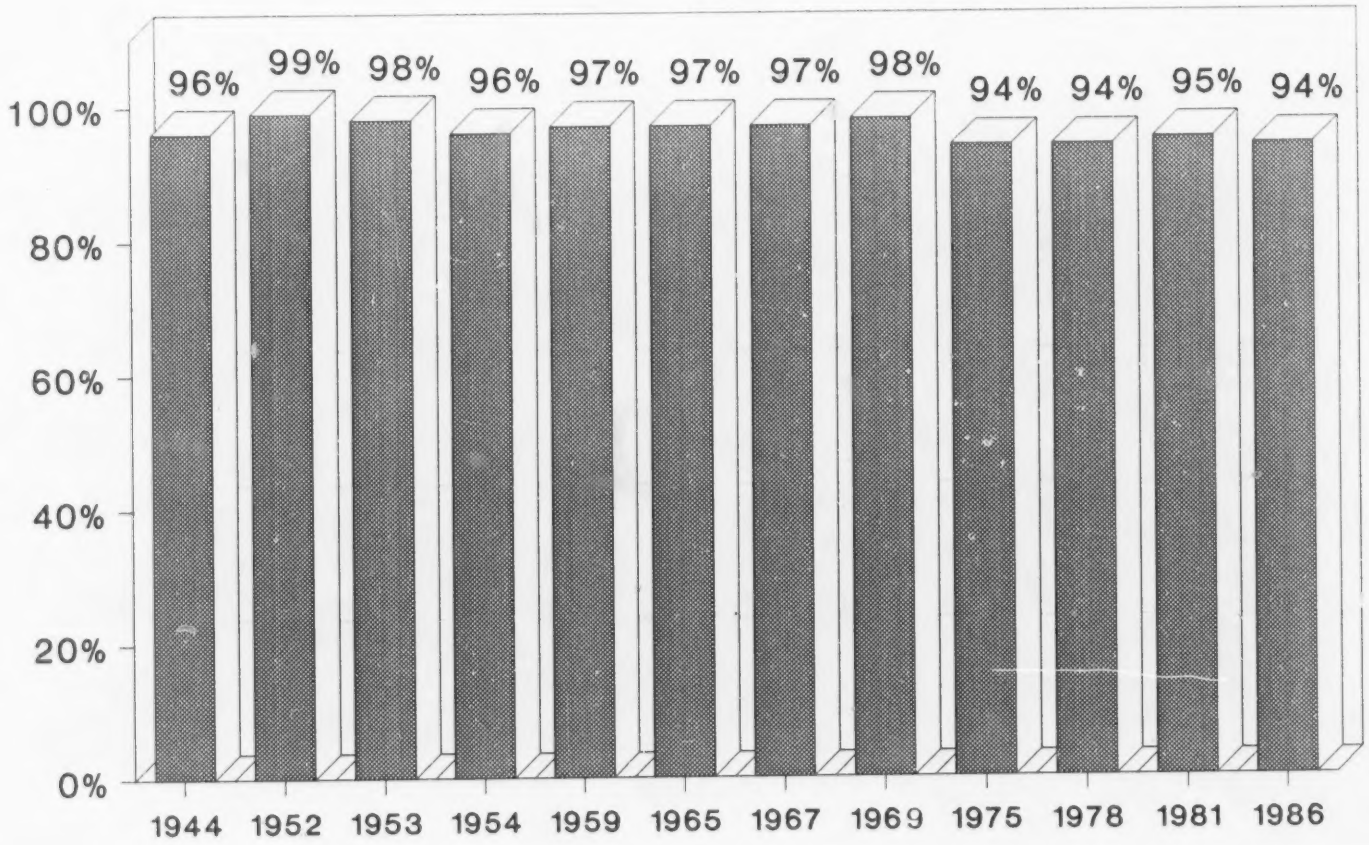
Question: Please tell me how much you agree with this statement: *We will all be called before God at the judgment day to answer for our sins.*

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree
NATIONAL	52%	28%	8%	6%
Men	45	31	10	7
Women	59	25	7	5
Under 30 years	45	35	8	6
30-49 years	50	26	9	9
50 and older	60	24	8	4
Protestants	60	26	7	3
White Protestants	58	26	7	4
Black Protestants	66	27	4	1
Evangelicals	78	17	2	2
Non-evangelicals	45	33	10	5
Catholics	49	35	9	2

Findings are based on personal interviews with 3,021 adults nationwide during May 1988.

Source: Gallup Survey for *Times Mirror*.

BELIEF IN GOD OR A UNIVERSAL SPIRIT



Belief in Divinity of Jesus Christ

Many Believe Jesus is God or the Son of God

Belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ is central to Christian belief, but has been defined variously in Christian credos at different points in history and for different denominations. Questioning people about their beliefs in his divinity can also take many forms. Gallup surveys in the past have asked:

1. Do you believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ?
2. Did he actually exist?
3. Is he God?
4. Is he the son of God?
5. Was he just another leader like Mohammed or Buddha?
6. Did he rise from the dead?

Depending upon how the question is asked, it seems apparent over about the past 40 years that about six in 10 Americans unswervingly believe in the divinity of Christ, an additional 25% believe he was divine in at least some respects and *may* have been divine in all. The remaining 15% express doubts about his divinity that range from agnosticism to complete disbelief that he ever existed in any form.

First, in a 1981 Gallup Poll, people were asked directly about their belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Six in 10 (60%) said they believed it is completely true, and 25% "mostly true" that he is divine.

Please tell me if you feel the following statement is completely true, mostly true, mostly untrue, or completely untrue: I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

	1981
Completely true	60%
Mostly true	25
Completely untrue	5
Mostly untrue	4
No opinion	6

In three surveys conducted between 1952 and 1983, respondents were first asked if they believed Jesus Christ actually lived, and then were asked about his divinity. About three people in four believed he is God or volunteered the answer that he was the son of God. Very few felt he had never lived or expressed ignorance about whether he did, but about one person in ten felt he was only an inspired religious leader, and not divine.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ ever actually lived? Do you think he was God, or just another leader like Mohammed or Buddha?

	1952[1]	1965[1]	1983[2]
	%	%	%
God	74	72	70
Another religious leader	12	14	11
Son of God, other	3	3	6
Don't know	7	7	4
Jesus never lived	1	1	2
Don't know whether Jesus lived	3	3	7

[1] Surveys conducted for the *Catholic Digest*
[2] Survey conducted for the Robert H. Schuller Ministries.

In 1978 and 1988 surveys on *The Unchurched American*, national samples of adults were asked a question that combined elements of Christ's existence and divinity. Between 1978 and 1988, the proportion believing that Jesus Christ was God or the son of God rose from 78% to 84%.

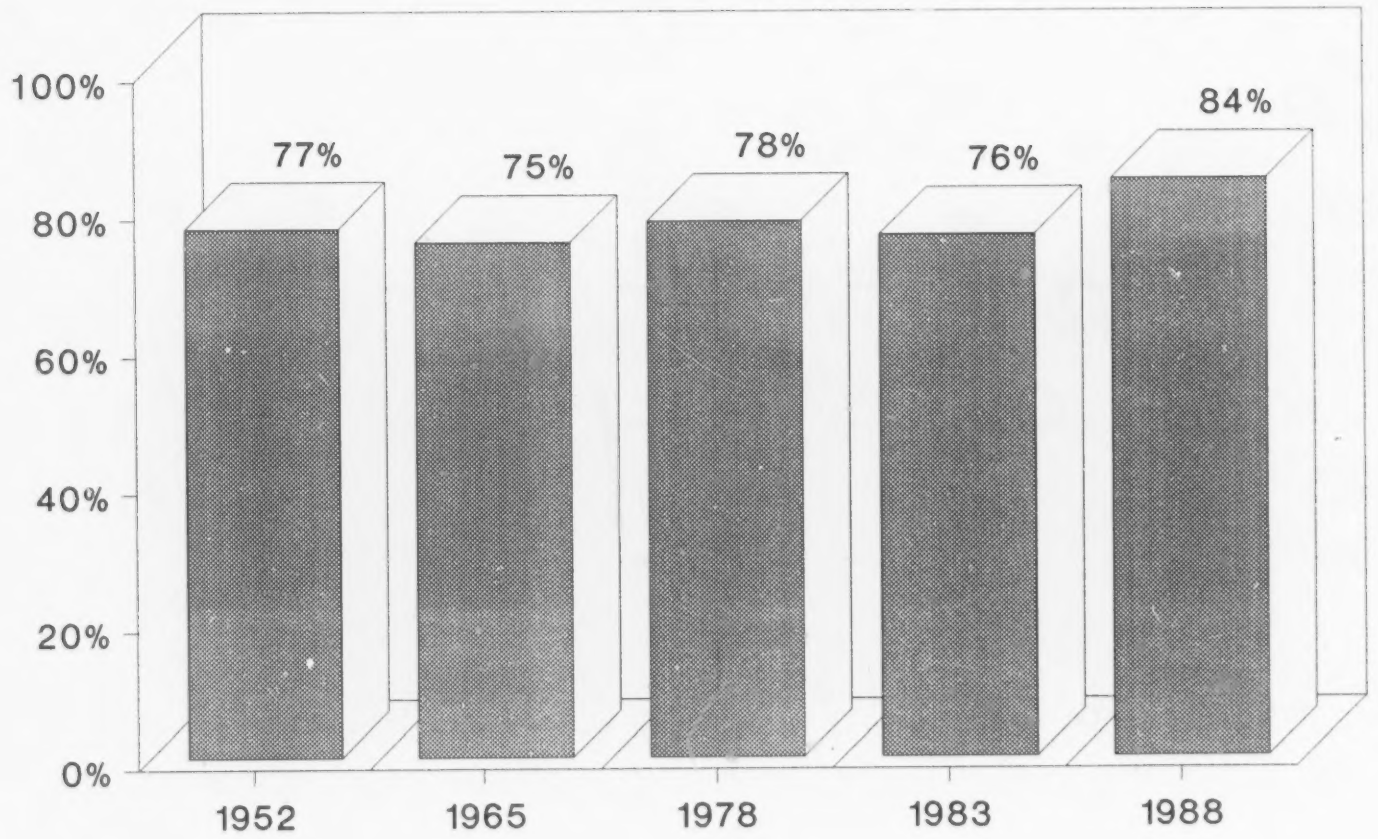
What do you believe about Jesus Christ: do you think Jesus Christ was God or Son of God, another religious leader like Mohammed or Buddha, or do you think Jesus Christ never actually lived?

	1978	1988
God or Son of God	78%	84%
Another leader	13	9
Never actually lived	1	1
Other (volunteered)	2	2
No opinion	6	4

Finally, in a question asked in the 1978 study of *The Unchurched American*, respondents were asked to rate their certainty concerning Christ's Resurrection on a 10-point scale. On this basis, about two in three (64%) expressed absolute certainty that he had risen from the dead, and an additional 11% felt it was highly probable that he had done so.

Rating	
10	64%
9	5
8	6
7	3
6	3
5	6
4	1
3	1
2	1
1	1
0	5
No opinion	4

BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST AS GOD OR THE SON OF GOD



Afterlife

7 in 10 Believe in Life After Death

Seven in 10 Americans (71 percent) say they believe in life after death, a proportion that closely parallels the findings of other surveys going back to 1944.

Here is the U.S. trend in belief in an afterlife, showing a high point of 77 percent recorded in 1952 and a low point of 67 percent in 1980:

Belief in Life After Death/Afterlife

1988	71%	[1]
1981	71	[2]
1980	67	[3]
1978	71	[4]
1975	69	
1968	73	
1965	75	[5]
1961	74	
1957	74	
1952	77	[6]
1948	68	
1944	76	

[1] Based on a Gallup Survey for the National Catholic Evangelization Association.

[2] Based on a survey by Gallup International Research Institutes (GIRI) for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) and the European Value Systems Study Group.

[3] Based on a survey conducted for *Adventures in Immortality*, by George Gallup, Jr. and William Proctor, McGraw-Hill, 1982.

[4] Based on a survey, the *Unchurched American*, conducted for a consortium of 30 denominations, convened by the National Council on Churches in Christ.

[5] Based on a survey conducted for *The Catholic Digest* by The Gallup Organization, Inc.

[6] Based on a survey conducted for *The Catholic Digest* by Ben Gaffin Associates.

A higher proportion of believers are found in the U.S. than in 10 other nations in a 13-nation survey. The figure for the people of Northern Ireland (72 percent) is statistically the same, while the percentage for the Republic of Ireland (76 percent) is slightly higher.

The following question and results are based on the survey conducted by GIRI for CARA and the European Value Systems Study group:

> *Which, if any, of the following do you believe in?. . . life after death?*

	Yes, believe	No, don't believe	No opinion
Republic of Ireland	76%	14%	11%
Northern Ireland	72	14	14
UNITED STATES	71	17	13
Spain	55	26	18
Finland	49	32	20
Italy	47	33	19
Great Britain	45	35	19
Norway	44	40	16
Netherlands	42	40	18
West Germany	39	40	21
Belgium	37	39	24
France	35	50	19
Denmark	26	55	19

* Some totals do not add to 100% due to rounding.

Belief in Heaven and Hell Also Firm

Little change has also occurred in America's belief in heaven and hell over the last three decades. In the latest (1980) survey (conducted for the book *Adventures in Immortality*), 71 percent expressed a belief in heaven, while 53 percent said they believe in hell.

Here are the questions asked and the trends:

> *Do you think there is a heaven where people who have led good lives are eternally rewarded?*

Belief in Heaven

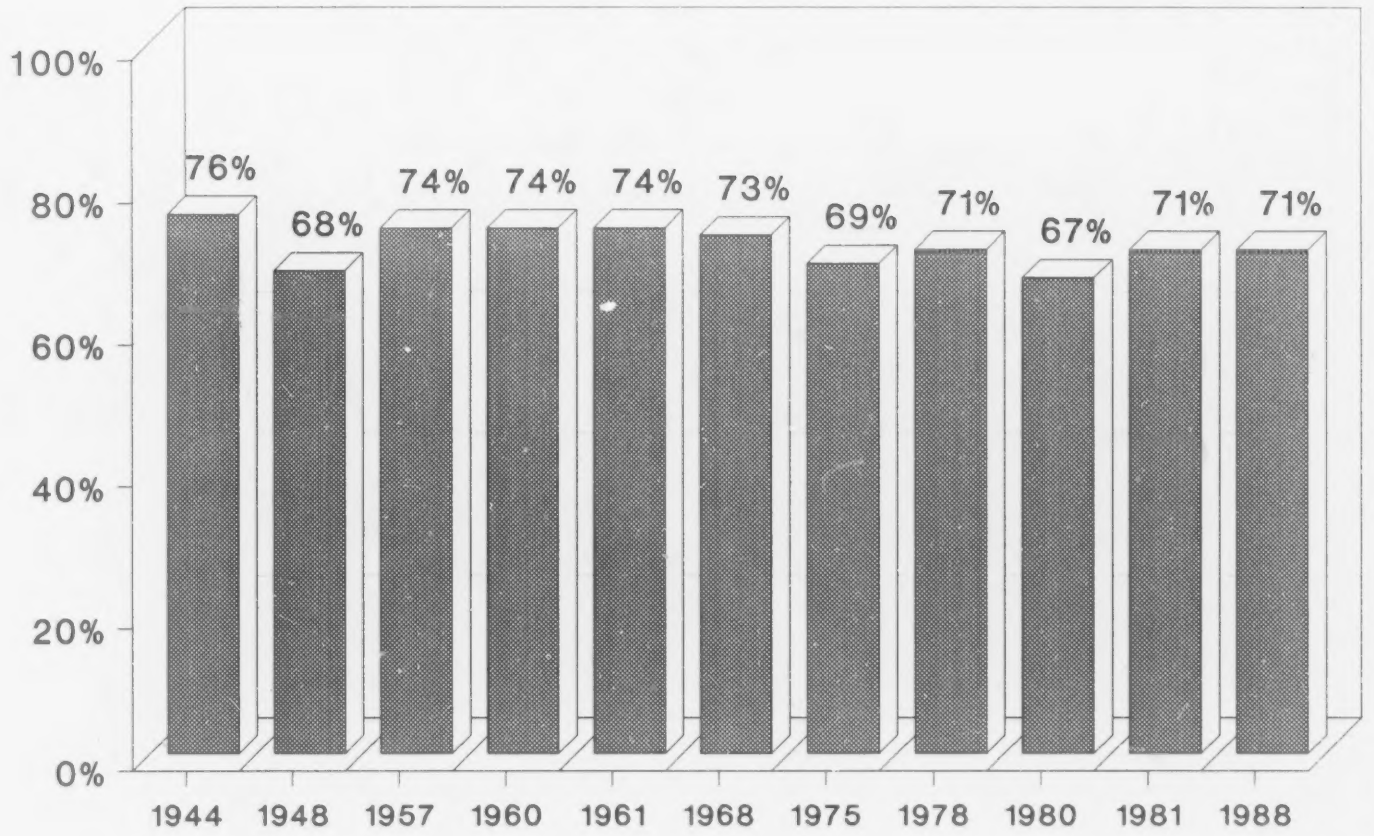
1981	71%
1965	68
1952	72

> *Do you think there is a hell to which people who have led bad lives and die without being sorry are eternally damned?*

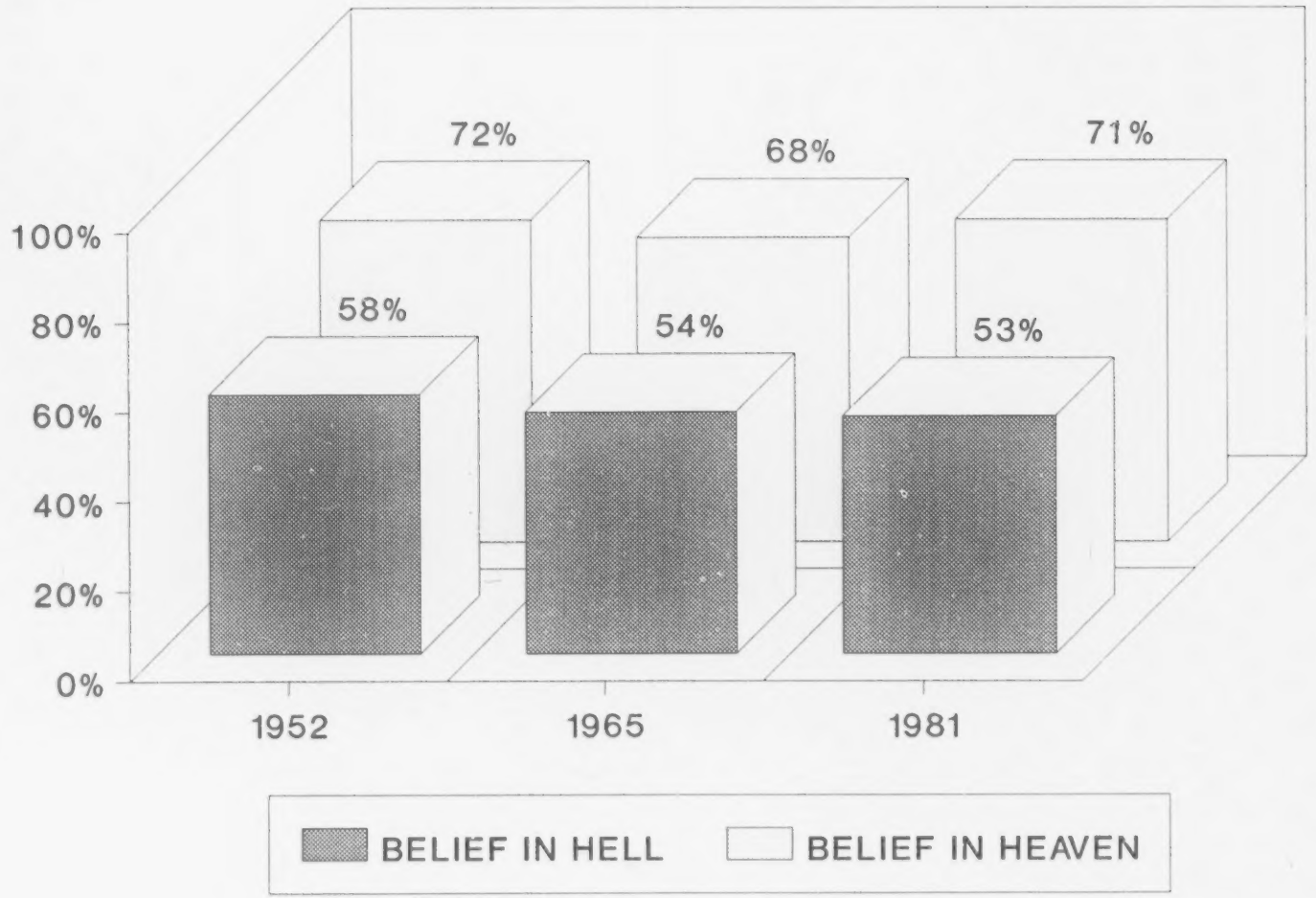
Belief in Hell

1981	53%
1965	54
1952	58

BELIEF IN LIFE AFTER DEATH



HEAVEN OR HELL



IV. Religious Identification

Religious Preference: Major Faiths
Profiles of Major Faiths
Protestant and Other Church Preference
Religious Preference: Protestant Denominations
Profiles of Protestant Denominations
Evangelicals

Religious Preference – Major Faiths

Little Change Found In Relative Strength Of Major Faiths In U.S.

The 1988/89 Gallup audit of religious preference showed little change in the relative strength of major faiths in the United States. The series of surveys, based on interviews with 17,917 adults (18 and older) shows 58% giving their religious preference as Protestant, 27% as Catholic, 2% as Jewish, and 2% indicating their religious preference to be The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

The percentage of those who say they have no religious preference statistically matches the findings recorded over the last half-decade, but is significantly higher than the 2% recorded in 1967. This annual audit of religious preference (for major faiths) was initiated by The Gallup Poll in 1947.

Religious Preferences

	1988/89	1987
Protestant	56%	57%
Roman Catholic	27	28
Jewish	2	2
Mormon (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)	2	2
Eastern Orthodox Churches	*	*
Other	2	2
No preference/No answer	10	9

*Less than one percent

Here is the four-decade trend. Specific figures for the Mormon and Orthodox Churches are omitted because of insufficient historical data, and are included under the "other" category.

Religious Preferences
— Yearly —

	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other	None
	%	%	%	%	%
1988-89	56	28	2	4	10
1987	57	28	2	4	9
1986	58	27	2	4	9
1985	57	28	2	4	9
1984	57	28	2	4	9
1983	56	29	2	4	9
1982	57	29	2	4	8
1981	59	28	2	4	7
1980	61	28	2	2	7
1979	59	29	2	2	8
1977-78	60	29	2	1	8
1976	61	27	2	4	6
1975	62	27	2	4	6
1974	60	27	2	5	6
—By 5-year Periods—					
1972	63	26	2	4	5
1967	67	25	3	3	2
1962	70	23	3	2	2
1957	66	26	3	1	3
1952	67	25	4	1	2
1947	69	20	5	1	6

NOTE: Results for some years do not add to 100% because of rounding.

Religious Preference: Major Faiths

Question: *What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	Eleven surveys during 1988 (Personal)				
	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	No religious preference	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**56%**	**28%**	**2%**	**9%**	**14,147**
SEX					
Men	54	28	2	11	7,030
Women	58	28	2	7	7,117
AGE					
18-29 years	48	32	1	14	2,714
18-24 years	46	32	1	15	1,331
25-29 years	49	32	1	13	1,383
30-49 years	56	27	2	10	5,528
50 & older	64	25	2	5	5,856
50-64 years	61	27	2	5	2,945
65 & older	67	23	3	4	2,911
REGION					
East	41	43	5	8	3,368
New England	34	52	4	8	658
Mid Atlantic	42	41	5	8	2,710
Midwest	60	28	1	9	3,767
East Central	59	28	1	10	2,294
West Central	61	27	1	8	1,473
South	72	18	*	7	4,287
Southeast	79	10	1	7	2,703
Southwest	63	30	*	5	1,584
West	48	25	1	14	2,725
Rocky Mountain	46	22	*	11	756
Pacific	49	26	2	15	1,969
RACE					
Whites	55	30	2	9	12,522
Blacks	78	8	*	11	1,427
Hispanics	21	68	1	6	918
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	58	28	2	7	9,493
Single	46	32	2	15	2,225
Divorced/Separated	57	24	1	14	1,094
Widowed	67	24	3	3	1,309
EDUCATION					
College graduates	52	27	4	11	3,070
College incomplete	56	28	2	9	3,547
High school graduates	58	29	1	8	4,601
Not high school graduates	59	27	1	9	2,898
POLITICS					
Republicans	64	24	1	6	4,242
Democrats	55	31	3	8	5,624
Independents	53	28	2	12	3,902
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
$40,000 and over	52	31	3	9	3,039
$25,000-$39,999	56	29	2	9	3,325
$15,000-$24,999	57	28	1	9	2,982
Under $15,000	62	23	1	10	4,041

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Religious Profiles: Major Faiths

Question: *What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	Eleven surveys during 1988 (Personal)			
	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Jewish	None
NATIONAL	100%	100%	100%	100%
SEX				
Men	46	48	49	61
Women	54	52	51	39
AGE				
18-29 years	23	30	19	38
18-24 years	13	17	10	23
25-29 years	10	13	9	15
30-49 years	37	38	41	44
50 & older	39	31	39	18
50-64 years	20	17	23	10
65 & older	19	14	16	8
REGION				
East	17	38	63	24
New England	2	10	10	7
Mid Atlantic	15	28	53	17
Midwest	27	25	8	23
East Central	16	16	5	16
West Central	11	9	3	7
South	40	19	12	20
Southeast	26	9	10	14
Southwest	14	10	2	6
West	16	18	17	33
Rocky Mountain	4	5	*	7
Pacific	12	13	17	26
RACE				
Whites	84	93	99	86
Blacks	14	4	*	10
Hispanics	2	19	1	5
MARITAL STATUS				
Married	66	62	59	51
Single	17	23	24	36
Divorced/Separated	8	7	7	10
Widowed	9	7	9	3
EDUCATION				
College graduates	18	17	44	22
College incomplete	24	26	25	28
High school graduates	33	34	24	29
Not high school graduates	25	22	7	21
POLITICS				
Republicans	32	26	15	22
Democrats	38	42	59	34
Independents	27	28	24	39
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
$40,000 and over	19	23	36	22
$25,000-$39,999	22	25	24	23
$15,000-$24,999	22	21	16	23
Under $15,000	31	25	17	27

* Less than one-half of one percent.

NOTE: For "profiles," read results down, not across — thus of Protestants, 46% are men and 54% are women.

'Mainline' Church Membership Still Below Level of 1960's, 1970's

The percentage of adults who state a preference for a "mainline" Protestant denomination continues to fall below the levels recorded in the 1960's and mid-1970's, although the declines have levelled off in the last few years.

In the latest (1988) audit, based on interviews with 15,460 adults nationwide, 10% chose a Methodist church, 6% Lutheran, 4% Presbyterian, and 2% Episcopalian.

The percentage of those stating a preference for a Baptist church has shown little change since 1967, when the audit was started.

It is important to bear in mind that these Gallup audits report *preference*, not *membership*.

Here are the latest findings, based on denominations receiving 2% or more in terms of preference:

Preferences for Major Protestant Denominations (1988)

Baptist	20%
Methodist	10
Lutheran	6
Presbyterian	4
Episcopalian	2
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	2
United Church of Christ (or Congregationalist or Evangelical and Reformed)	2

Here is the long-term trend (available for only five major Protestant groupings):

Protestant Church Preferences

	Baptist	Methodist	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Episcopalian
1988	20%	10%	6%	4%	2%
1987	20	9	6	3	2
1986	20	9	5	2	2
1985	20	10	6	2	2
1984	20	9	7	2	3
1983	21	10	7	3	2
1982	19	10	6	4	2
1981	19	10	6	4	2
1980	19	10	6	4	2
1979	19	11	6	4	2
1978	19	11	6	4	2
1976	21	11	7	5	3
1975	20	11	7	5	3
1974	21	14	7	6	3
1969	20	14	7	6	3
1967	21	14	7	6	3

Protestant and Other Church Preference
(Based on 11 In-Person National Surveys in 1988)

	NATIONAL
Baptist Churches	**20%**
Southern Baptist Convention	9
American Baptist Churches	2
The National Baptist Convention of America	*
The National Baptist Convention of U.S.A., Inc.	*
Other Baptist	3
Baptist, don't know which denomination	5
Methodist Churches	**10**
United Methodist Church	7
A.M.E. Zion Church	*
A.M.E. Church	*
Other Methodist	1
Methodist, don't know which denomination	2
Lutheran Churches	**6**
American Lutheran Church	2
Lutheran Church in America	1
Missouri Synod Lutheran	1
Other Lutheran	*
Lutheran, don't know which denomination	1
Presbyterian Churches	**4**
Episcopal Churches	**2**
United Church of Christ, (or Congregationalist or Evangelical and Reformed)	**2**
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**	**2**
Other Protestant	**6**
Protestant unspecified	**4**
Other religion***	**1**
TOTAL PROTESTANT	**57%**

* Less than one-half of one percent.

** May include persons who are affiliated with independent Christian churches.

*** Includes those who describe themselves as Protestant but name a denomination not classified as Protestant.

NOTE: In reading the tables, it should be borne in mind that the respondents themselves designated their denominations. Therefore, Southern Baptists may be confused with Baptists who live in the South but do not belong to the Southern Baptist Convention, and it is likely that some survey respondents in the South and West who belong to the Church of Christ identified themselves with the United Church of Christ.

Religious Preference: Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	Eleven surveys during 1988 (Personal)					
	Total Baptist	Methodist	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Episcopalian	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**20%**	**10%**	**6%**	**4%**	**2%**	**14,147**
SEX						
Men	19	9	5	4	2	7,030
Women	20	10	6	3	2	7,117
AGE						
18-29 years	19	6	3	2	2	2,714
18-24 years	20	5	4	2	1	1,331
25-29 years	19	7	4	3	2	1,383
30-49 years	19	9	5	3	2	5,528
50 & older	21	13	7	5	3	5,856
50-64 years	21	11	6	4	3	2,945
65 & older	21	15	7	6	3	2,911
REGION						
East	10	10	3	4	3	3,368
New England	6	6	1	2	5	658
Mid Atlantic	12	11	4	5	3	2,710
Midwest	14	12	12	4	1	3,767
East Central	15	12	9	5	1	2,294
West Central	13	10	19	4	1	1,473
South	38	11	2	3	2	4,287
Southeast	42	13	2	3	2	2,703
Southwest	30	8	2	2	1	1,584
West	11	6	5	5	2	2,725
Rocky Mountain	11	7	5	4	2	756
Pacific	11	3	5	5	3	1,969
RACE						
Whites	16	10	6	4	2	12,522
Blacks	54	10	*	1	*	1,427
Hispanics	6	2	1	1	1	918
MARITAL STATUS						
Married	19	10	6	4	2	9,493
Single	18	7	4	2	2	2,225
Divorced/Separated	24	8	5	3	2	1,094
Widowed	24	15	6	5	3	1,309
EDUCATION						
College graduates	10	11	6	6	4	3,070
College incomplete	16	10	6	4	3	3,547
High school graduates	21	10	6	3	1	4,601
Not high school graduates	29	9	4	2	1	2,898
POLITICS						
Republicans	13	18	8	6	3	4,242
Democrats	25	9	4	3	2	5,624
Independents	16	8	6	3	2	3,902
HOUSEHOLD INCOME						
$40,000 and over	12	12	6	5	4	3,039
$25,000-$39,999	16	10	6	4	2	3,325
$15,000-$24,999	22	9	5	3	1	2,982
Under $15,000	28	10	5	3	1	4,041

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Religious Preference: Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	Eleven surveys during 1988 (Personal)					
	Total Baptist	Southern Baptist	American Baptist	Total Methodist	United Methodist	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**20%**	**9%**	**2%**	**10%**	**7%**	**14,147**
SEX						
Men	19	8	2	9	7	7,030
Women	20	9	2	10	8	7,030
AGE						
18-29 years	19	8	3	6	4	2,714
18-24 years	20	8	3	5	3	1,331
25-29 years	19	7	3	7	5	1,383
30-49 years	19	9	2	9	7	5,528
50 & older	21	10	2	13	10	5,856
50-64 years	21	9	2	11	8	2,945
65 & older	21	10	2	15	12	2,911
REGION						
East	10	2	3	10	7	3,368
New England	6	*	1	6	4	658
Mid Atlantic	12	2	4	11	8	2,710
Midwest	14	4	3	12	9	3,767
East Central	15	3	3	12	10	2,294
West Central	13	5	2	10	8	1,473
South	38	23	2	11	8	4,287
Southeast	43	25	1	13	10	2,703
Southwest	30	19	2	8	6	1,584
West	11	3	1	6	3	2,725
Rocky Mountain	11	4	1	7	3	756
Pacific	10	3	1	3	3	1,969
RACE						
Whites	16	8	1	10	8	12,522
Blacks	55	20	10	10	3	1,427
Hispanics	6	3	1	2	2	918
MARITAL STATUS						
Married	19	9	2	10	8	9,493
Single	18	7	3	7	5	2,225
Divorced/Separated	24	9	2	8	5	1,094
Widowed	24	12	3	15	11	1,309
EDUCATION						
College graduates	10	6	1	11	9	3,070
College incomplete	16	8	2	10	7	3,547
High school graduates	21	9	3	10	8	4,601
Not high school graduates	29	12	3	9	6	2,898
POLITICS						
Republicans	17	8	1	13	10	4,242
Democrats	25	11	3	9	6	5,642
Independents	16	7	1	8	6	3,902
HOUSEHOLD INCOME						
$40,000 and over	12	6	1	12	9	3,039
$25,000-$39,999	16	8	2	10	7	3,325
$15,000-$24,999	22	10	3	9	7	2,982
Under $15,000	28	11	4	10	6	4,041

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Religious Preference: Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	Eleven surveys during 1988 (Personal)					
	Total Lutheran	American Lutheran	Missouri Synod Lutheran	United Church of Christ	Christian Church	Number of Interviews
NATIONAL	**6%**	**2%**	**1%**	**2%**	**2%**	**14,147**
SEX						
Men	5	2	1	2	2	7,030
Women	6	2	1	2	2	7,117
AGE						
18-29 years	4	1	1	1	2	2,714
18-24 years	4	1	1	1	2	1,331
25-29 years	4	1	1	1	2	1,383
30-49 years	5	2	1	2	2	5,528
50 & older	7	2	2	2	2	5,856
50-64 years	6	2	2	2	2	2,945
65 & older	7	2	2	2	2	2,911
REGION						
East	3	1	1	2	1	3,368
New England	1	*	*	6	*	658
Mid Atlantic	4	1	1	1	1	2,710
Midwest	12	5	3	2	3	3,767
East Central	9	2	3	3	3	2,294
West Central	19	9	4	2	2	1.473
South	2	*	1	2	2	4,287
Southeast	2	*	*	1	2	2,703
Southwest	2	1	1	2	2	1,584
West	5	2	1	2	3	2,725
Rocky Mountain	5	2	1	2	3	756
Pacific	5	2	1	1	3	1,969
RACE						
Whites	6	2	1	2	2	12,522
Blacks	*	*	*	1	1	1,427
Hispanics	1	*	*	1	2	918
MARITAL STATUS						
Married	6	2	2	2	2	9,493
Single	4	1	1	1	2	2,225
Divorced/Separated	5	1	1	1	2	1,094
Widowed	6	2	2	3	2	1,309
EDUCATION						
College graduates	6	2	1	2	2	3,070
College incomplete	6	2	2	2	2	3,547
High school graduates	6	2	1	2	2	4,601
Not high school graduates	4	1	1	1	2	2,898
POLITICS						
Republicans	8	2	2	3	2	4,242
Democrats	4	1	1	1	2	5,624
Independents	6	2	2	2	2	3,902
HOUSEHOLD INCOME						
$40,000 and over	6	2	2	2	2	3,039
$25,000-$39,999	6	2	1	2	2	3,325
$15,000-$24,999	5	2	1	2	2	2,982
Under $15,000	5	2	1	*	2	4,041

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Profiles of Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	Eleven surveys during 1988 (Personal)				
	Total Baptist	Methodist	Lutheran	Presbyterian	Episcopalian
NATIONAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
SEX					
Men	48	43	48	48	40
Women	52	57	52	52	60
AGE					
18-29 years	28	17	20	16	17
18-24 years	17	9	10	9	9
25-29 years	11	8	10	7	8
30-49 years	38	35	39	32	40
50 & older	34	48	41	51	42
50-64 years	18	23	22	22	20
65 & older	16	25	19	29	22
REGION					
East	13	23	16	28	33
New England	2	3	1	2	9
Mid Atlantic	11	20	15	26	24
Midwest	16	31	55	24	16
East Central	11	17	21	13	11
West Central	5	14	34	11	5
South	61	34	11	28	28
Southeast	40	25	7	22	22
Southwest	21	9	4	6	6
West	10	12	18	20	23
Rocky Mountain	3	4	4	6	6
Pacific	7	8	14	14	17
RACE					
Whites	70	92	98	97	94
Blacks	29	7	1	2	3
Hispanics	1	1	1	1	1
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	63	70	69	69	62
Single	20	13	16	15	20
Divorced/Separated	8	7	7	6	10
Widowed	9	10	8	10	8
EDUCATION					
College graduates	10	19	24	29	44
College incomplete	20	24	29	30	27
High school graduates	37	36	32	25	21
Not high school graduates	32	20	15	16	8
POLITICS					
Republicans	25	27	39	43	38
Democrats	50	27	29	27	33
Independents	23	18	31	29	27
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
$40,000 and over	14	21	25	29	39
$25,000-$39,999	20	24	27	22	20
$15,000-$24,999	23	22	22	22	15
Under $15,000	39	28	22	22	18

Profiles of Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	Eleven surveys during 1988 (Personal)				
	Total Baptist	Southern Baptist	American Baptist	Total Methodist	United Methodist
NATIONAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
SEX					
Men	48	50	41	43	42
Women	52	50	59	57	58
AGE					
18-29 years	28	26	32	17	19
18-24 years	17	17	21	9	10
25-29 years	11	9	11	8	9
30-49 years	38	38	35	35	34
50 & older	34	35	33	48	47
50-64 years	18	19	16	23	21
65 & older	16	16	17	25	26
REGION					
East	13	4	47	23	24
New England	2	*	4	3	3
Mid Atlantic	11	3	43	20	21
Midwest	16	9	24	31	32
East Central	11	5	18	17	18
West Central	5	4	6	14	14
South	61	80	18	34	33
Southeast	40	53	14	25	23
Southwest	21	27	4	9	10
West	10	7	11	12	11
Rocky Mountain	3	3	2	4	3
Pacific	7	4	9	8	8
RACE					
Whites	70	77	50	92	97
Blacks	29	22	50	7	2
Hispanics	1	1	*	1	1
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	63	65	52	70	70
Single	20	19	28	13	13
Divorced/Separated	8	7	11	7	6
Widowed	9	9	9	10	10
EDUCATION					
College graduates	10	12	10	19	21
College incomplete	20	22	16	24	24
High school graduates	37	36	39	36	35
Not high school graduates	32	30	34	20	19
POLITICS					
Republicans	25	25	20	27	37
Democrats	50	49	56	27	36
Independents	23	23	21	18	25
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
$40,000 and over	14	16	12	21	22
$25,000-$39,999	20	23	15	24	25
$15,000-$24,999	23	23	22	22	22
Under $15,000	39	34	46	28	27

* Less than one-half of one percent.

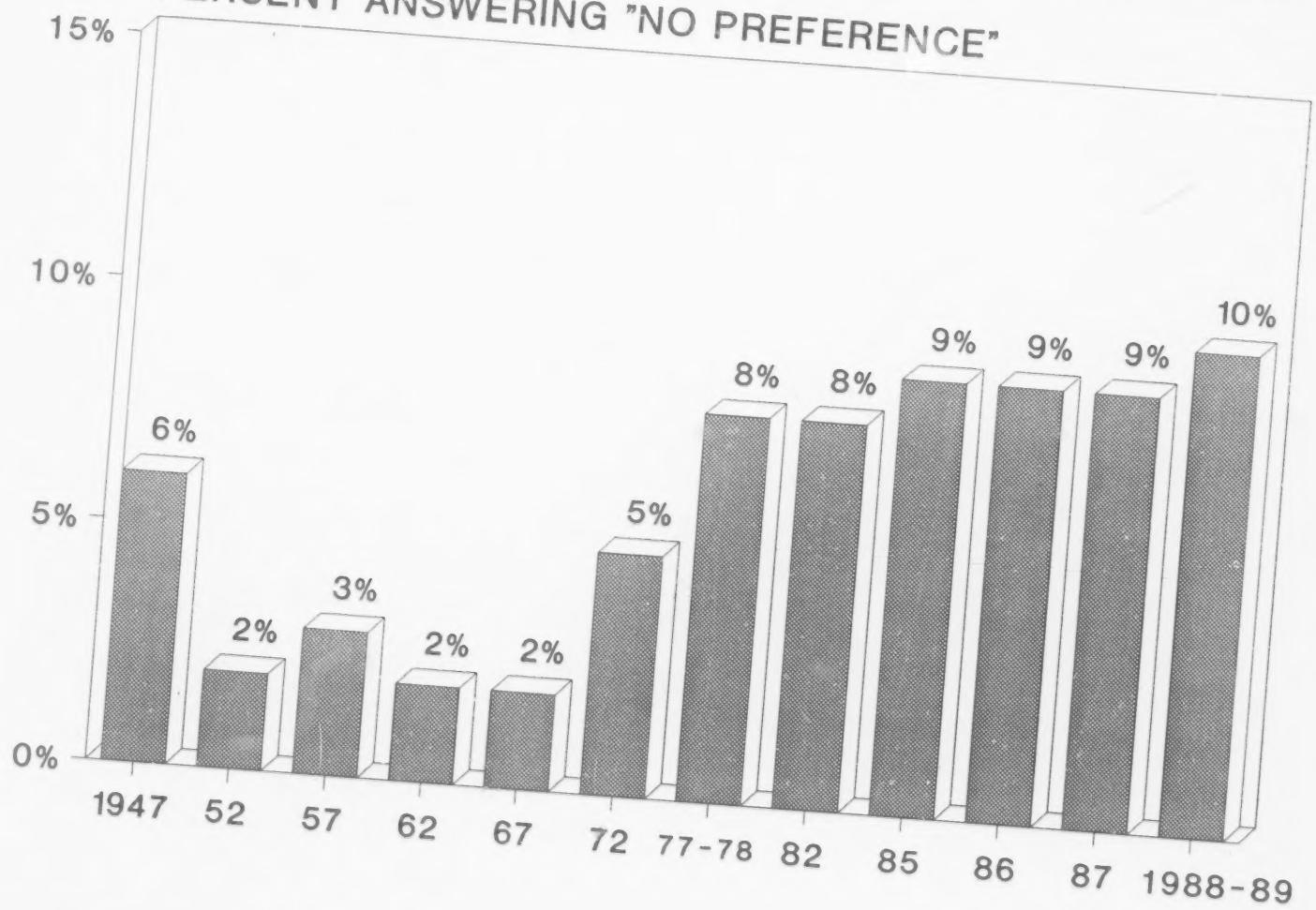
Profiles of Protestant Denominations

Question: *What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?*

	Eleven surveys during 1988 (Personal)				
	Total Lutheran	American Lutheran	Missouri Synod Lutheran	United Church of Christ	Christian Church
NATIONAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
SEX					
Men	48	46	51	45	47
Women	52	54	49	55	53
AGE					
18-29 years	20	16	19	14	26
18-24 years	10	10	6	8	13
25-29 years	10	6	13	6	13
30-49 years	39	38	35	39	34
50 & older	41	45	46	45	40
50-64 years	22	21	30	17	19
65 & older	19	24	16	28	21
REGION					
East	16	12	10	29	8
New England	1	*	2	11	2
Mid Atlantic	15	12	8	18	6
Midwest	55	63	63	42	34
East Central	21	17	28	26	17
West Central	34	46	35	16	17
South	11	5	14	19	29
Southeast	7	3	7	8	15
Southwest	4	2	7	11	14
West	18	20	13	10	29
Rocky Mountain	4	4	2	3	6
Pacific	14	16	11	7	23
RACE					
Whites	98	99	99	95	94
Blacks	1	*	*	4	3
Hispanics	1	1	1	1	3
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	69	73	72	64	63
Single	16	11	18	13	15
Divorced/Separated	7	6	5	8	10
Widowed	8	10	5	14	11
EDUCATION					
College graduates	24	18	26	21	13
College incomplete	29	32	25	25	28
High school graduates	32	29	33	32	34
Not high school graduates	15	21	16	22	24
POLITICS					
Republicans	39	39	29	42	35
Democrats	29	37	17	29	33
Independents	31	23	16	27	29
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
$40,000 and over	25	24	25	27	15
$25,000-$39,999	27	23	33	25	21
$15,000-$24,999	22	23	19	17	27
Under $15,000	22	25	19	26	30

*Less than one-half of one percent.

RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE IN AMERICA



Evangelicals

Third of Americans Are 'Born-Again'

One-third (33%) of the people of the U.S. describe themselves as "born-again" or evangelical Christians. The proportion of the population describing themselves this way, in answer to the following question, has remained constant in recent years.

> *Would you describe yourself as a "born-again" or evangelical Christian, or not?"*

Black Americans are almost twice as likely as whites to consider themselves to be evangelical Christians. Hispanics (24%) show a somewhat less-than-average tendency to describe themselves as evangelical.

Protestant evangelicals (49%) outnumber Catholics (12%), who describe themselves that way, by a margin of four to one.

The "born again" also are more likely to be women (37%), 50 or older (39%), those who did not complete high school (45%), and those who have an annual household income of less than $15,000 (40%).

Half of the people living in the South (49%) say they are evangelicals, compared to 32% in the Midwest and 26% in the West. Only 21% of the residents of the East would describe themselves as born-again or evangelical Christians.

Of course to some people the terms, "born again" or evangelical, may have taken on specific meanings that denote political conservatism or other non-religious aspects that might make them hesitant to describe themselves in these ways. Alternatively worded questions, however, yielded similar results.

Question: *Would you describe yourself as a "born-again" or evangelical Christian, or not?*

Five surveys during 1988 (Telephone & Personal)

	Yes	No	Not sure	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**33%**	**63%**	**4%**	**5,045**
SEX				
Men	29	67	4	2,514
Women	37	59	4	2,531
AGE				
18-29 years	30	66	4	1,137
30-49 years	31	66	3	2,031
50 & older	39	57	4	1,836
REGION				
East	21	75	4	1,208
Midwest	32	64	4	1,338
South	49	47	4	1,527
West	26	70	4	971
RACE				
Whites	31	65	4	4,420
Non-whites	49	47	4	606
Blacks	57	40	3	431
Hispanics	24	68	8	311
EDUCATION				
College graduates	22	76	2	1,384
College incomplete	30	66	4	1,240
High school graduates	35	61	4	1,700
Not high school graduates	45	49	6	690
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
$40,000 and over	25	73	2	984
$25,000-$39,999	33	64	3	940
$15,000-$24,999	35	60	5	687
Under $15,000	40	55	5	842
RELIGION				
Protestants	49	48	3	2,883
Catholics	12	83	5	1,345

V. Religious Practices

Church Membership
Church Attendance
Alternative Church Attendance
Prayer
The Bible

Church Membership

Seven In 10 Claim Church Membership

Seven adults in 10 (69%) claimed membership in a church or synagogue during 1989. This marks a very modest increase in membership for the 1980s decade in which membership was at an average of 68%. Membership during the decade peaked at 71% in 1985, but dropped to 65% in 1988. The 1988 membership figures are the all-time low since the question was first asked by Gallup in 1937. It is conceivable that the church scandals that year may have had an adverse impact upon membership, but if this is the case it is reassuring to note that membership quickly rebounded to previous levels for the period.

Prior to the late 1970s, membership was always reported by 70% or more of the U.S. adult population. It was an average 73% in the 1930s and peaked at an average of 74% during the 1940s, including a record high membership count of 76% in 1947. Average attendance dropped one percentage point during the 1950s and 60s era to 73 percent. During the 1970s, a greater fall in membership occurred when the average was reduced to 70%.

Decline of the West

Only a bare majority of adults (55%) in the western region of the country claim membership in a church or synagogue. By comparison, 72% who live in the remaining regions of the U.S. say they are members.

In line with attendance figures, membership increases according to age. Lowest membership is found among those who are 18 to 29 years of age (61%). Affiliation increases to two adults in three among those who are ages 30 to 49 (66%), and to three in four among those 50 and older (76%). The "baby boomers" who swelled the U.S. population's proportion of young adults during the 1970s and 1980s may have had an adverse impact on overall membership and attendance simply because of their age. As the life cycle continues and we enter the period that forecasters have called the "greying of America," church membership and attendance may be boosted as the ranks of the young grow thinner, while those who are middle-age and older become the dominant elements of the U.S. population.

Women outnumber men as members, by a margin of 73% to 63%. The affluent (72%) are more likely than those with below-average incomes (67%) to report formal affiliation with a church or synagogue. Non-whites (74%) are slightly more likely than whites (68%) to be members. No significant difference in membership status is noted according to educational background.

Measures of membership are determined by response to the question:

Do you happen to be a member of a church or synagogue?

Such reports are self-classifications, and may include some who are not currently on the rolls of their local church or synagogue. It should also be borne in mind that some churches consider people to be members at birth and such distinctions may not always be self-reported.

The audits from 1955 through 1989 were based on an average of several surveys each year. Prior to 1955 they were based on single annual surveys.

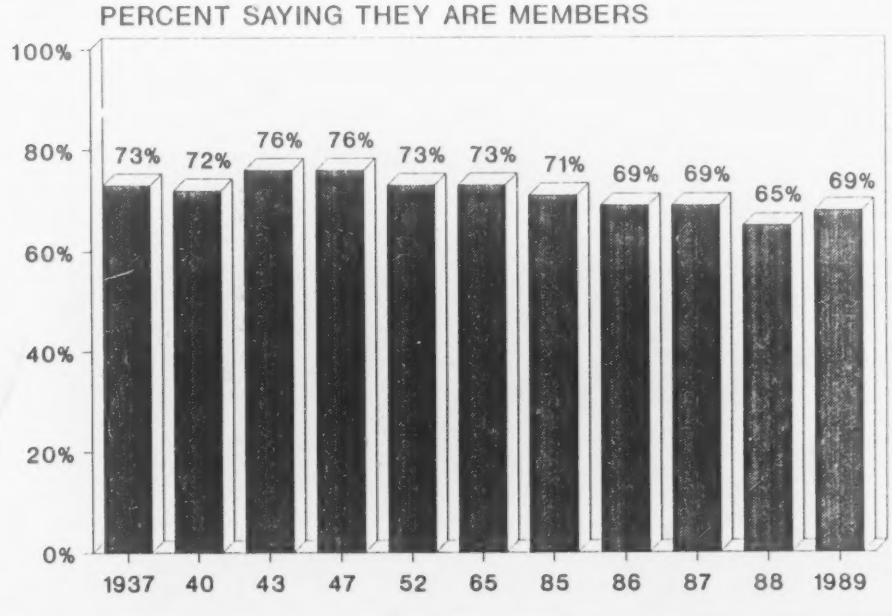
Chuch/Synagogue Membership

1989	69%
1988	65
1987	69
1986	69
1985	71
1984	68
1983	69
1982	67
1981	68
1980	69
1970s	70
1960s	73
1950s	73
1940s	74
1930s	73

Church Membership

Question: *Do you happen to be a member of a church or synagogue?*

	1989 Surveys		
	Yes	No	Number of Interviews
NATIONAL	**69%**	**31%**	**4,481**
SEX			
Men	63	37	2,247
Women	73	27	2,234
AGE			
18-29 years	61	39	1,025
30-49 years	66	34	1,894
50 and older	76	24	1,498
REGION			
East	69	31	1,044
Midwest	72	28	1,178
South	74	26	1,337
West	55	45	921
RACE			
Whites	68	32	3,898
Non-whites	74	26	552
EDUCATION			
College graduates	66	34	1,242
College incomplete	70	30	998
High school graduates	70	30	1,712
Not high school graduates	67	33	506
HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
$30,000 and over	72	28	1,879
$20,000-$29,999	67	33	637
Under $20,000	66	34	1,333



Church Attendance Remarkably Constant in Recent Years

Four adults in 10 (43%) attended church or synagogue in a typical week in 1989.

Churchgoing has remained remarkably constant since 1969, after having declined from the high points of attendance of 49% recorded in 1955 and 1958.

The level of churchgoing in 1989 was higher among women (48% attended in a typical week) than among men (38%). The frequency of attendance also climbs as the faithful grow older.

Following is the trend since 1939. The audits from 1955 through 1989 were based on average of several surveys during each year. The figures prior to 1955 were based each year on single surveys.

Attendance may climb as the faithful grow older.

Church/Synagogue Attendance

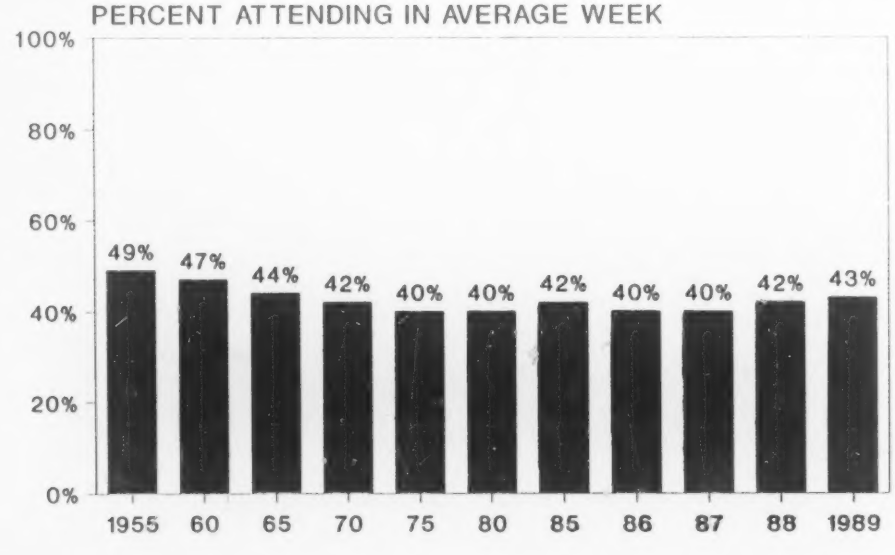
Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days?

	Attended Church
1989	43%
1988	42
1987	40
1985	42
1983	40
1982	41
1981	41
1979	40
1972	40
1969	42
1967	42
1962	46
1958	49
1957	47
1955	49
1954	46
1950	39
1940	37
1939	41

Church Attendance

Question: *Did you happen to attend church or synagogue in the last 7 days or not?*

	1989 Surveys		
	Yes	No	Number of Interviews
NATIONAL	**43%**	**57%**	**3,251**
SEX			
Men	38	62	1,633
Women	48	52	1,618
AGE			
18-29 years	34	66	784
30-49 years	40	60	1,378
50 & older	52	48	1,048
REGION			
East	43	57	747
Midwest	47	53	856
South	46	54	978
West	32	68	670
RACE			
Whites	42	58	2,831
Non-whites	48	52	403
EDUCATION			
College graduates	45	55	901
College incomplete	41	59	723
High school graduates	43	57	1,239
Not high school graduates	42	58	377
HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
$30,000 and over	45	55	1,359
$20,000-$29,999	41	59	436
Under $20,000	41	59	929



Alternatives To Traditional Worship

Many Find Inspiration Outside the Church

The resiliency and dynamics of religion over the millennia may in large part be derived from the ability of the faithful to move beyond traditional places and forms of worship, to develop new expressions of their devotion.

To many practitioners "going to church" is the defining experience of their religion, but to about one American in five (22%) a prayer group, Bible study, or other religious group may be an important supplement or even a total substitute for the Church service. Among the unchurched, for example, one person in 10 (11%) reports alternative religious meetings in the previous two years.

One person in 10 (9%) has attended a "charismatic religious group" meeting either in church or outside of church. Such groups are generally defined as drawing people who believe they have been conferred with "gifts of the Spirit," such as speaking in tongues, spiritual healing, or prophesy. While 17% of those attending charismatic meetings did so only once — and probably more out of curiosity than anything — 48% of attendees say they participate occasionally, and 35% are regular celebrants.

Both the outside meetings and charismatic groups tend to attract more whites than non-whites. Blacks are the most likely group to attend charismatic group meetings, while hispanics are those most often found at meetings outside the traditional church setting.

Protestants are about twice as likely as Catholics to participate in these forms of worship, but it should be remembered that for many Catholics, exploration of alternatives occurred only after the time of the changes of Vatican II.

Alternative Religious Attendance

Question: *In the last two years did you attend a prayer group, Bible study, or other religious group which meets somewhere other than a church? . . . have you attended a charismatic religious group; that is, one including the gifts of the spirit.*

	Attended . . .		
	Meeting outside of church	Charismatic group	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**22%**	**9%**	**2,556**
SEX			
Men	19	8	1,270
Women	25	9	1,286
AGE			
18-29 years	23	9	548
30-49 years	21	9	1,004
50 & older	22	9	981
REGION			
East	16	5	611
Midwest	21	10	614
South	25	11	835
West	25	9	496
RACE			
Whites	22	8	2,054
Blacks	20	13	436
Hispanics	29	11	363
EDUCATION			
College graduates	22	8	513
College incomplete	29	10	453
High school graduates	21	9	979
Not high school graduates	19	9	603
RELIGION			
Protestants	27	11	1,497
Catholics	15	6	732

Three Adults in Four Say Prayer Is an Important Part of Daily Life

Three adults in four in 1987 said that prayer is an important part of their daily life.

Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with this statement: Prayer is an important part of my daily life.

	1987
Completely agree	41%
Mostly agree	35
Mostly disagree	17
Completely disagree	6
Not sure	1
	100%

Since 1948, approximately nine adults in 10 have reported that they ever pray to God.

Do you ever pray to God?

Ever Pray to God?

1988	88%
1985	87
1982	88
1978	89
1965	92
1952	92
1948*	90

*Question asked in 1948 survey: Do you ever pray?

Among those who do pray, the proportion of those who pray two or more times a day has dropped from about four adults in 10 during the 1950s and 1960s, to about three in 10 during the last decade.

Pray Twice a Day or More
(Based on those who pray)

1988	31%
1985	31
1982	30
1978	27
1965	41
1952	42

Women, people who are 50 years of age or older, Blacks, and Protestants are among those who pray most often.

Pray Three Times a Day or More
(Based on those who pray)

	1988
NATIONAL	14%
Men	11
Women	17
18-24 years	7
25-29 years	10
30-49 years	15
50 & older	18
Whites	14
Blacks	19
Hispanics	14
College graduates	14
College incomplete	13
High school graduates	14
Less than H.S. graduates	17
Protestants	16
Catholics	11

Majority of Americans Believe Bible Is Inerrant

The Bible is read daily or more often by one person in 10 (11%). An additional 9% of adults say they read it more often than weekly. Weekly Bible reading, which may often include reading at weekly services, is reported by 13%.

Protestants are more likely than Catholics to report reading the Bible more than weekly, by a margin of 30% to 7%. Women, blacks, older people, the less-well educated, evangelicals, and residents of the South are more inclined to read the Bible and to read it more often.

A majority of adults believe the Bible is inerrant. For 31%, it is the actual word of God, to be taken literally, word for word. Blacks (45%) and Hispanics (40%) are particularly likely to regard the Bible this way. For 24%, the Bible is the inspired word of God, still inerrant, but in some instances to be interpreted symbolically rather than literally.

About one person in five (22%) regards the Bible as the inspired word of God, but believes it may contain some historical and scientific errors. Those who attended or graduated from college most often view the Bible, with or without errors, as being an inspired rather than actual transcript of God's words.

For a few people (7%), the Bible is not considered to have been either the inspired or actual word of God, but is believed instead to be mankind's best understanding of God's nature.

One person in 10 (10%) regards the Bible as nothing more than an ancient book of human fables, legends, history and moral precepts. This opinion doubles among college graduates (20%).

How often do you read the Bible?

Bible Reading

	1986	1982	1978
More than once a day	1%	2%	1%
Daily	10	13	11
2 or 3 times a week	9	9	8
Weekly	13	9	10
2 or 3 times a month	6	5	4
Once a month	8	7	7
Less than once a month	26	25	28
Never read the Bible	22	24	24
No report	5	6	7
	100%	100%	100%

Read Bible During Previous Year

1943	64%
1944	62
1952	67
1978	69
1982	70
1986	73

NOTE: In 1952 and earlier, respondents were asked about reading "at home" only.

Beliefs About the Bible

Question: *Which of the statements on this card comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?*

A. The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.

B. The Bible is the inspired word of God. It contains no errors, but some verses are to be taken symbolically rather than literally.

C. The Bible is the inspired word of God, but it may contain historical and scientific errors.

D. The Bible was not inspired by God, but it represents humankind's best understanding of God's nature.

E. The Bible is an ancient book of human fables, legends, history and moral precepts.

	1988						
	A	B	C	D	E	No opinion	Number of interviews
TOTAL	**31%**	**24%**	**22%**	**7%**	**10%**	**6%**	**2,556**
SEX							
Male	28	23	21	8	13	7	1,270
Female	34	26	22	6	7	5	1,286
AGE							
Under 30	29	26	21	8	9	7	548
30-49 years	28	23	24	8	12	5	1,004
50 & older	35	25	20	6	9	5	981
RACE							
White	29	25	23	8	10	5	2,054
Black	45	23	14	4	4	10	436
Hispanic	40	20	19	7	6	8	363
REGION							
East	28	19	25	9	12	7	611
Midwest	28	26	24	7	9	6	614
South	38	29	16	6	5	6	835
West	26	23	22	8	16	5	496
EDUCATION							
College graduates	11	24	28	14	20	3	513
College incomplete	26	28	25	5	10	6	453
High school graduates	34	24	23	7	7	5	979
Not high school graduates	45	23	13	5	6	8	603
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE							
Protestant	37	27	22	5	5	4	1,497
Catholic	26	28	26	8	7	5	732

VI. Religion and Society

Importance of Religion
Confidence in Religion
Ethics of the Clergy
Religion and Today's Problems
Influence of Religion
Religion Meeting Needs
Influence of Religious Values

Importance of Religion

Majority of Americans Say Religion Is 'Very Important'

Throughout the 1980s, approximately 55% of the adult population saw religion as very important in their lives, 30% said it was fairly important, 14% believed it was not very important, and 1% held no opinion. Over this 10-year span, opinion on the subject never varied by more than a statistically non-significant percentage point or two. Final measurements for the decade taken by The Gallup Organization in 1989 were an exact parallel of the findings for the entire 10-years period.

Three earlier surveys, however, could suggest that far from being a constant phenomenon, the sense of the importance of religion may be a matter that fluctuates widely through the ages. A survey taken by The Gallup Organization in 1978 showed a lower proportion of the population (52%) enthusiastic about religion, while by contrast earlier surveys showed very high levels of religious importance in 1965 (70%) and 1952 (75%). In the absence of survey data we can only speculate about how low the sense of importance of religion in America may have dropped when the sixties generation held full sway during the early 1970s, and how high it may be peaked had we been able to ask the question during the great religious revivals and "awakenings" that historians tell us swept the country in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries.

Currently, those most likely to say religion plays an important part in their lives include women, those who are 50 or older, non-whites, Southerners, and Protestants. In line with these characteristics, they also are usually less well educated and have lower-than-average incomes.

Importance of Religion

	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important
1989	55%	30%	14%
1988	54	31	14
1987	53	32	14
1986	55	30	14
1985	55	31	13
1984	56	30	13
1983	56	30	13
1982	56	30	13
1981	56	29	14
1980	55	31	13
1978	52	32	14
1965	70	22	7
1952	75	20	5

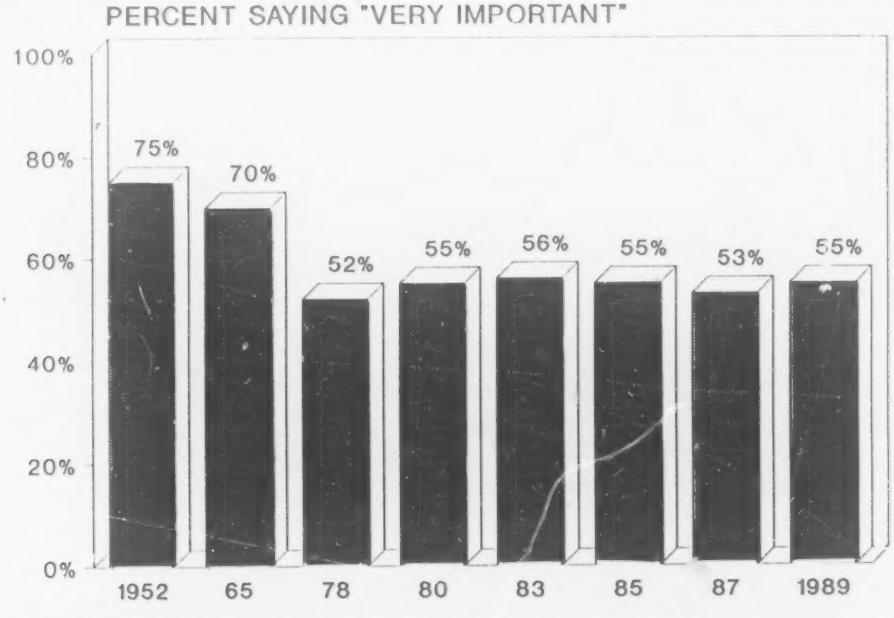
"No opinion" (1 to 2 percent, annually) omitted.

Importance of Religion

Question: *How important would you say religion is in your own life — very important, fairly important, or not very important?*

	Five selected weeks during 1989 (Telephone & Personal)				
	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	No opinion	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**55%**	**30%**	**14%**	**1%**	**4,481**
SEX					
Men	47	33	19	1	2,247
Women	62	27	10	1	2,234
AGE					
18-29 years	42	40	18	*	1,025
30-49 years	51	33	16	*	1,894
50 & older	68	21	10	1	1,498
REGION					
East	49	34	16	1	1,044
Midwest	53	34	12	1	1,178
South	67	23	9	1	1,337
West	47	31	20	2	921
RACE					
Whites	53	32	15	*	3,898
Non-whites	72	20	7	1	552
EDUCATION					
College graduates	48	31	21	*	1,242
College incomplete	50	34	16	*	998
High school graduates	56	32	12	*	1,712
Not high school graduates	69	21	9	1	506
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
$30,000 and over	49	34	16	1	1,879
$20,000-$29,999	53	32	14	1	637
Less than $20,000	61	27	12	*	1,333

* Less than one-half of one percent.



Loss in Public Confidence in Religion And Other Institutions

The military has replaced the church, or organized religion, as the nation's most trusted institution. Those expressing a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in organized religion dropped significantly from 66% to 52% between 1985 and 1989.

Conversely, the military gained two percentage points in the same period, moving to a 63% confidence level in 1989 from 61% in 1985.

The Supreme Court registered an even greater downturn than the church of public confidence, recording the largest one-year decline for all institutions surveyed since 1973. The High Court plunged from 56% saying they have a high degree of confidence in 1988, to 46% in 1989. This 10 percentage-point drop in 1989 wiped out a 14 percentage-point gain in confidence, from 42% to 56%, from the years 1985 to 1988.

Among other institutions, the public schools dropped from 49% to 43%, banks from 49% to 42%, and Congress from 35% to 32% — all between 1988 and 1989.

Church or Organized Religion
(Percent saying "great deal" or "quite a lot")

	1989	1986	1985
NATIONAL	52%	57%	66%
Men	45	52	63
Women	58	62	69
Whites	51	57	65
Blacks	56	65	73
Protestants	58	63	73
Catholics	51	58	70
18-29 years	49	51	65
30-49 years	45	56	63
50 and older	61	62	71
College grads.	43	52	60
College inc.	47	55	60
High school grads.	57	60	70
Not H.S. grads.	59	61	72
East	45	53	57
Midwest	56	58	70
South	59	67	75
West	45	47	59

Nation's Most Trusted Institutions
(Percent saying "great deal" or "quite a lot")

	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1983	1979	1973
Church or organized religion	52%	59%	61%	57%	66%	62%	65%	66%
Military	63	58	61	63	61	53	54	NA
U.S. Supreme Court	46	56	52	53	56	42	45	44
Banks	42	49	51	49	51	51	60	NA
Public schools	43	49	50	49	48	39	53	58
Newspapers	NA	36	31	37	35	38	51	39
Congress	32	35	NA	41	39	28	34	42
Television	NA	27	28	27	29	25	38	37
Organized labor	NA	26	26	29	28	26	36	30
Big business	NA	25	NA	28	31	28	32	26

NA = Not asked.

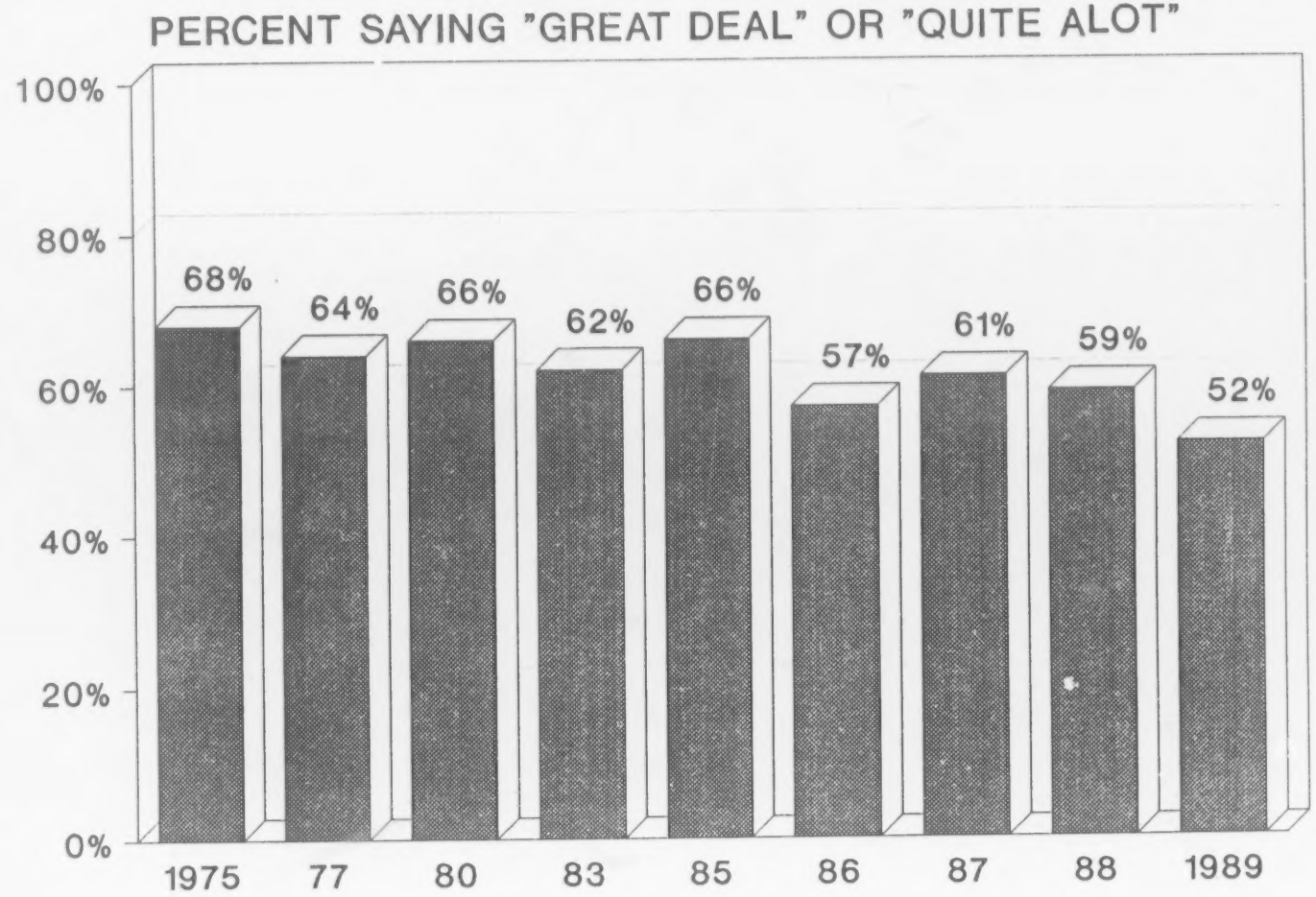
Confidence in the Church or Organized Religion

Question: *I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one: a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little.*

	1989						
	Great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None	No opinion	Number of interviews
TOTAL	**30%**	**22%**	**26%**	**17%**	**3%**	**2%**	**1,238**
SEX							
Men	26	19	28	20	4	3	619
Female	34	25	24	14	2	1	619
AGE							
18-29 years	27	22	26	18	6	1	270
30-49 years	26	19	32	19	3	1	551
50 & older	36	25	19	13	2	5	398
REGION							
East	24	21	28	21	3	3	294
Midwest	31	25	26	14	2	2	313
South	37	22	22	15	2	2	372
West	25	19	29	18	5	4	259
RACE							
White	29	22	26	17	3	3	1,064
Non-white	36	20	21	19	3	1	160
EDUCATION							
College graduates	22	29	36	11	2	1	375
College incomplete	20	26	36	16	1	1	260
High school graduates	23	25	33	16	2	1	450
Not high school graduates	17	18	28	29	1	7	146
HOUSEHOLD INCOME							
$50,000 & over	20	32	36	10	1	1	265
$30,000–$49,999	21	27	37	12	2	*	304
$20,000–$29,999	27	23	32	15	3	*	216
Under $20,000	18	21	31	24	2	4	341
RELIGION							
Protestants	36	23	24	13	2	2	689
Catholic	24	27	30	15	1	3	329
Born-again	46	24	18	8	1	3	406

* Less than one-half of one percent.
Source: The Gallup Poll

CONFIDENCE IN ORGANIZED RELIGION



Confidence in the Clergy

The Clergy Receives High Ethical Marks

The clergy in recent years has gotten some black eyes from the press as a result of the peccadilloes and moral offenses of some of its more visible members, but despite the unfavorable publicity, a majority of the public continues to rate the honesty and standards of the profession highly.

In 1990, 12% of the public said the clergy rated "very high" on honesty and ethical standards, and 43% gave a rating of "high." One person in three (35%) believes the clergy are only average in these respects, but less than one person in 10 holds the negative opinion that clergy standards are either low (6%) or very low (1%).

The clergy have always ranked first or second among the professions tested since their first rating was taken by The Gallup Poll in 1977. Currently, they are second to pharmacists and druggists (62%, favorable ratings) who took over first place in 1988. Previous to that time, highly positive ratings of the clergy steadily climbed from 61% in 1977 to 67% in 1985.

The clergy are in good company, as they are followed closely in the current rankings by physicians (52%), dentists (52%), college academicians (51%), and engineers (50%). By contrast, at the very bottom of the list of the 25 professions and occupations that were tested, are such people as stockbrokers (14%), insurance salesmen (13%), ad practitioners (12%), and car salesmen (6%).

Although the clergy have maintained their relative position in the overall standings, when the results are based on an absolute standard of comparison to the past, there is a strong suggestion that the televangelist scandals probably have been at least partially, if not wholly, responsible for a significant negative shift in opinion towards the profession. After peaking at 67% of highly favorable opinion in 1985, ratings of the field dropped to 60% by 1988, and yet another five percentage points to the current rating of 55% in 1990. Furthermore, between 1988 and 1990, the proportion rating the clergy "very high" for their honesty and professional standards, dropped 10 percent points, from 22% to just 12%.

Percent Ranking Clergy Very High Or High

	%	Rank
1990	55	2nd
1988	60	2nd
1985	67	1st
1983	64	1st
1981	63	1st
1977	61	1st

High Ethics and Standards – 1990

Pharmacists	62%
Clergy	55
Physicians	52
Dentists	52
College teachers	51
Engineers	50
Police	49
Funeral directors	35
Bankers	32
TV reporters	32
Journalists	30
Business executives	25
Newspaper reporters	24
Senators	24
Lawyers	22
Local office holders	21
Building contractors	20
Congressmen	20
State office-holders	17
Real estate agents	16
Labor union leaders	15
Stockbrokers	14
Insurance salesmen	13
Ad practitioners	12
Car salesmen	6

61% Say Religion Can Answer All or Most of Today's Problems

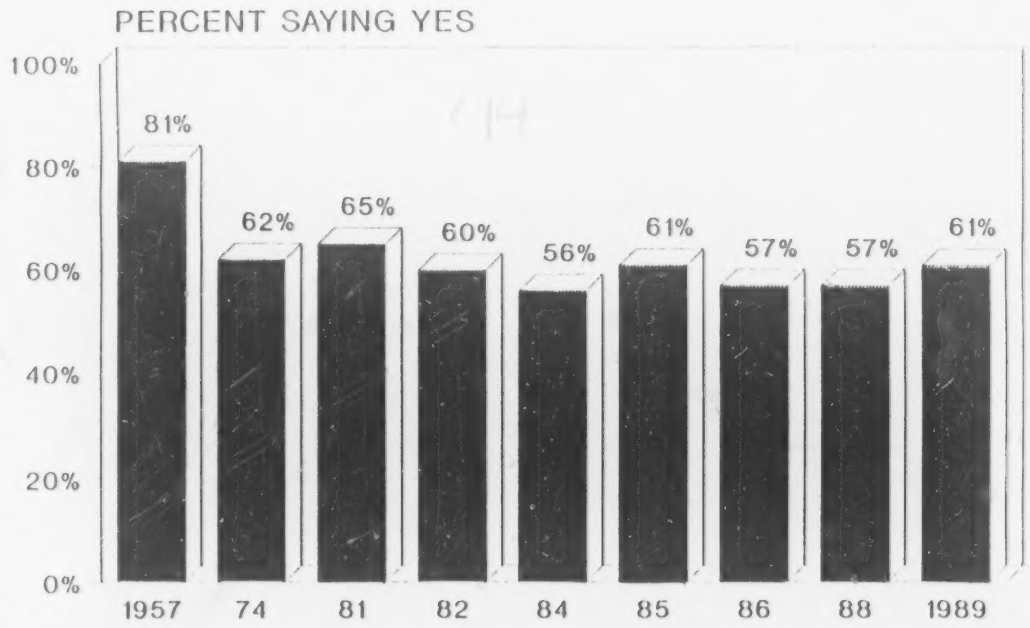
Six adults in 10 (61%) believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems. Disagreeing are 17% who hold the opinion that religion is largely old-fashioned and out of date. An additional 22% are uncertain about the ability of religion to address today's issues.

Opinion on the ability of religion to answer contemporary problems has fluctuated sharply over the years, ranging from a high of 81% in 1957 to a low of 56% in 1984.

Can Religion Answer Problems?

	Can answer	Out of date	No opinion
1989	61%	17%	22%
1988	57	20	23
1986	57	23	20
1985	61	22	17
1984	56	21	23
1982	60	22	18
1981	65	15	20
1974	62	20	18
1957	81	7	12

There was a modest increase for 1989 in the belief that religion can solve today's problems.



Can Religion Answer Today's Problems?

Question: *Do you believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, or that religion is largely old-fashioned and out of date?*

	April 1989			
	Can answer problems	Largely old-fashioned	No opinion	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**61%**	**17%**	**22%**	**1,007**
SEX				
Men	54	24	22	505
Women	66	12	22	502
AGE				
18-29 years	59	23	18	283
30-49 years	57	21	22	380
50 & older	66	10	24	330
REGION				
East	53	23	24	231
Midwest	56	19	25	266
South	71	13	16	299
West	60	16	24	211
RACE				
Whites	58	19	23	878
Non-whites	77	12	11	128
Blacks	86	8	6	83
EDUCATION				
College graduates	49	23	28	287
College incomplete	60	19	21	251
High school graduates	61	18	21	333
Not high school graduates	73	10	17	135
POLITICS				
Republicans	61	18	21	371
Democrats	64	15	21	314
Independents	57	18	25	284
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
$40,000 and over	54	17	29	244
$25,000-$39,999	54	26	20	229
$15,000-$24,999	68	13	19	179
Under $15,000	67	15	18	242

Influence of Religion

Public Sees Religion's Influence Continuing To Decline

Opinion of religion's influence enjoyed a brief resurgence in the mid-1980s, but half of the populace (49%) at the end of the decade expressed the belief that religion was losing its influence on American life. Only one person in three (33%) felt that religion was increasing in influence, and an additional 9% volunteered the opinion that its degree of influence was unchanged.

At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?

Influence of Religion

	1989
Increasing	33%
Losing	49
Staying the same (volunteered)	9
No opinion	9
	100%

When this question was first asked in 1957, 69% thought religion was gaining influence on American life, and only 14% saw any decline in its influence. Following is the long-term trend, with the proportions saying "the same" or holding no opinion excluded.

Influence of Religion on American Life

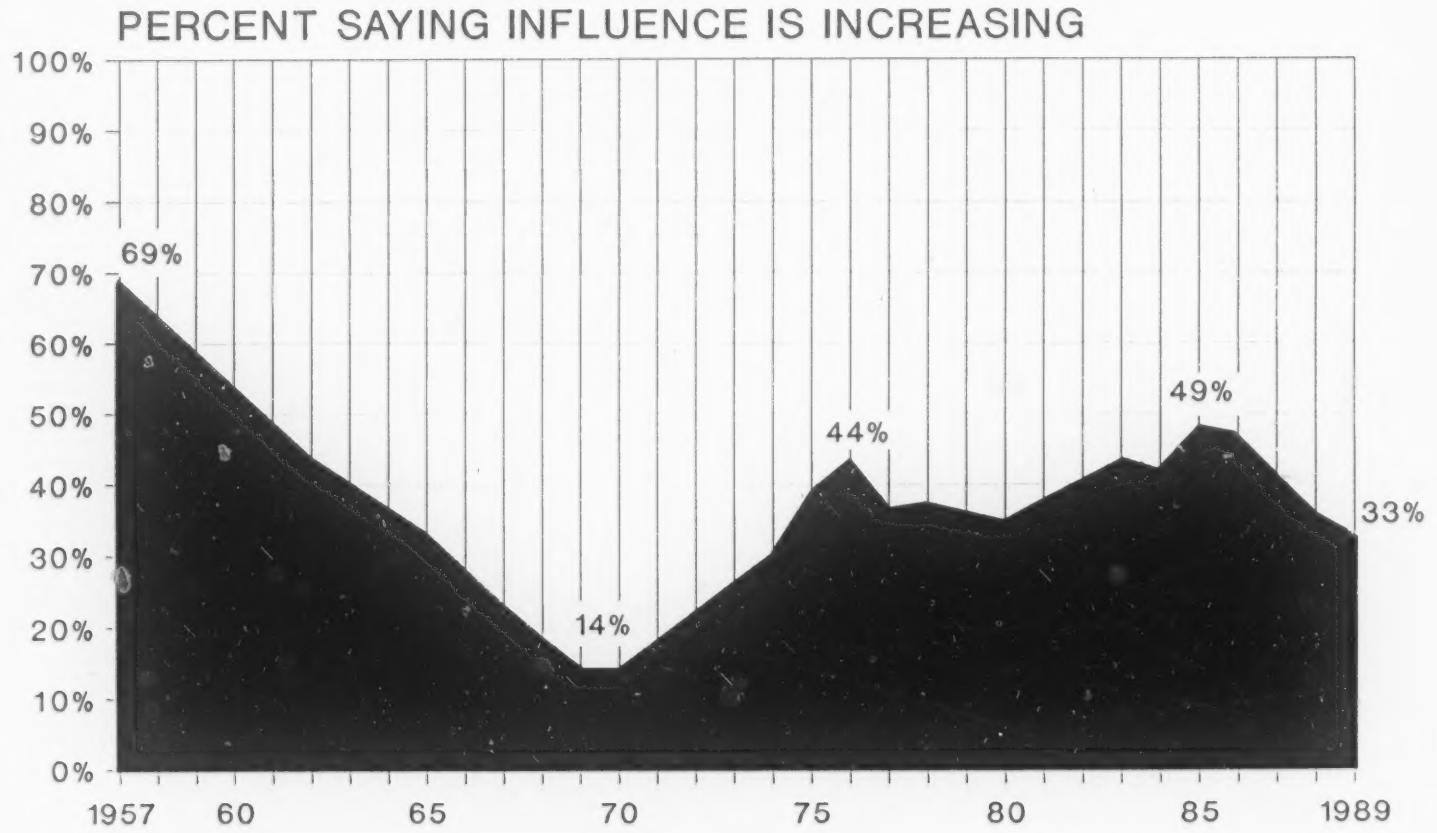
	Increasing %	Losing %
1989	33	49
1988	36	49
1986	48	39
1985	49	39
1984	42	39
1983	44	42
1981	38	46
1980	35	46
1978	37	48
1977	36	45
1976	44	45
1975	39	51
1974	31	56
1970	14	75
1969	14	70
1968	18	67
1967	23	57
1965	33	45
1962	45	31
1957	69	14

Influence of Religion on American Life

Question: *At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?*

	April, 1989				
	Increasing	Losing	Stay the same	No opinion	Number of interviews
NATIONAL	**33%**	**49%**	**9%**	**9%**	**1007**
SEX					
Men	29	50	13	8	505
Women	37	48	5	10	502
AGE					
18-29 years	33	49	11	7	283
30-49 years	36	49	7	8	380
50 & older	30	50	9	11	330
REGION					
East	31	55	5	9	231
Midwest	31	52	9	8	266
South	34	45	10	11	299
West	38	43	10	9	211
RACE					
Whites	33	48	9	10	878
Non-whites	36	52	8	4	128
Blacks	34	53	9	4	83
EDUCATION					
College graduates	35	48	10	7	207
College incomplete	35	53	6	6	251
High school graduates	34	49	9	8	333
Not high school graduates	27	46	10	17	135
POLITICS					
Republicans	32	53	8	7	371
Democrats	35	50	7	8	314
Independents	35	41	12	12	284
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
$40,000 and over	37	49	10	4	244
$25,000-$39,999	37	49	7	7	229
$15,000-$24,999	31	52	8	9	179
Under $15,000	31	48	8	13	242

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON AMERICAN LIFE



Americans Give Church High Marks For Meeting Their Needs

Two Americans in three (65 percent) say their church is doing a "good" or "excellent" job of meeting their needs. Twenty-three percent say their church does an "excellent" job of meeting their needs. Another 42 percent say their church does a "good" job. Only four percent say the church is doing a "poor" job, while 17 percent say it is doing a "fair" job.

Women, those over 50, blacks, Southerners, and those with a high school diploma or less were the most satisfied with their churches.

These findings come from a Gallup survey commissioned for the book, "The People's Religion: American Faith in the '90s" (Macmillan, 1989).

There were significant differences among key groups in the level of enthusiasm they expressed for their church. The most lukewarm support came from Hispanics, who were almost evenly divided, with 30 percent giving the church an "excellent" rating and 31 percent giving it only a "fair" rating.

Thirty percent of Hispanics gave their church an excellent rating. Only Southern Baptists gave their church an equally high rating. But only 31 percent of Hispanics — by far the most in any group — gave their church a "fair" rating.

These figures were not surprising in light of other surveys which indicate religious turmoil among Hispanics. Hampered by a severe language problem, many Hispanics new to this country are caught in a tug-of-war between conservative Protestant denominations seeking to win them over and traditional Catholic churches. About 70 percent of Hispanics are Catholic, 20 percent Protestant, and 10 percent have no affiliation.

Catholics, overall, however, may be more satisfied with their church's performance today than they were a few years ago. The new survey found that 70 percent of Catholics said their church was doing a good or excellent job of meeting their needs. In a 1986 survey with slightly different wording — in which Catholics were asked to rate the church's handling of a number of groups — 50 percent said it did a good or excellent job of meeting their own needs.

The same percentage of Protestants as Catholics gave their church a good or excellent rating, although Protestants were slighly more enthusiastic, with 27 percent of them saying their church was doing an excellent job compared with only 23 percent of Catholics.

Southern Baptists were the most positive Protestant denomination, with 76 percent giving their churches a good or excellent rating. Seventy-one percent of Baptists and 70 percent of Methodists rated their churches good or excellent.

Mainline Protestants — combining Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians — were no more likely than the national average to rate their churches as good or excellent.

How Well the Church Meets Family and Personal Needs

Question: *How good a job is your church or synagogue doing in meeting your own personal and family needs?*

	December 1988 (1,051 interviews)			
	Excellent	Good	Only fair	Poor
NATIONAL	**22%**	**43%**	**17%**	**4%**
SEX				
Men	20	43	16	4
Women	27	41	17	4
AGE				
18-29 years	19	41	19	7
30-49 years	23	42	17	3
50 & older	26	43	15	4
REGION				
East	22	45	14	3
Midwest	20	46	16	5
South	26	44	17	3
West	24	31	20	5
RACE				
Whites	23	41	17	4
Blacks	18	49	18	5
Hispanics	30	29	31	3
EDUCATION				
College graduates	22	40	15	5
College incomplete	20	40	17	5
High school graduates	27	40	16	4
Not high school graduates	23	43	18	3
RELIGION				
Protestants	27	43	16	4
Catholics	22	48	19	4

NOTE: "No opinion" (14%, nationally) omitted.

Influence of Religious Values

Highly Religious Group Seem Likely To Have Better Quality of Life

Americans who say religion is the most important influence in their lives, and those who receive a great deal of comfort from their beliefs, are far more likely than their counterparts to feel close to their families, to find their jobs fulfilling, and to be excited about the future.

Those who agreed strongly with the statements, "You receive comfort and support from your religious beliefs," and "Your religious faith is the most important influence in your life," were also more likely to strongly agree with a series of statements about happiness and personal optimism than the overall survey group. But when "agreed" and "agreed strongly" responses were combined, the answers of the overall group and the subgroup of those who agreed that religion was important in their lives showed no significant differences.

This pattern emerges from a recent Gallup Poll in which responses by levels of religious enthusiasm were cross-matched. Those who are the most enthusiastic about religion are also more likely than others to feel financially secure, to be happy, and less likely to get depressed, and less likely to have a lot of stress in their lives.

The survey asked respondents whether they agreed strongly, agreed, disagreed, or disagreed strongly with a series of statements.

Overall, 31% of Americans agreed strongly that they receive comfort and support from their religious beliefs; 51% said they agreed, 12% said they disagreed and 4% said they disagreed strongly. (Figures do not add up to 100% because the "no opinions" responses were dropped.)

Twenty-two percent of Americans agreed strongly that their faith was the most important influence in their lives; 38 percent said they agreed, 31% said they disagreed, and 6 percent said they disagreed strongly.

"You receive comfort and support from your religious beliefs."

Agree strongly	31%
Agree	51
Disagree	12
Disagree strongly	4
No sure	2
	100%

"Your faith is the most important influence in your life."

Agree strongly	22%
Agree	38
Disagree	31
Disagree strongly	6
No sure	3
	100%

Religious Enthusiasm and Mood, Lifestyles of Americans

	Total	Agree strongly religious beliefs are comforting	Agree strongly religion is most important
'You feel very close to your family.'			
Agree strongly	53%	86%	80%
Agree	42	12	14
Disagree	4	1	3
Disagree strongly	1	1	1
'You are financially secure.'			
Agree strongly	16	33	29
Agree	54	43	42
Disagree	22	15	20
Disagree strongly	6	8	7
'You are generally a happy person'			
Agree strongly	36	69	61
Agree	61	30	35
Disagee	2	1	2
Disagree strongly	1	1	2
"Your occupation is exciting and fulfilling."			
Agree strongly	21	36	31
Agree	46	29	34
Disagree	14	11	10
Disagree strongly	4	6	4
'You Often Get Depressed'			
Agree strongly	4	7	6
Agree	19	13	17
Disagree	50	33	37
Disagree strongly	26	46	40
'You have a lot of stress in your life'			
Agree strongly	12	18	19
Agree	35	26	28
Disagree	42	32	33
Disagree strongly	11	23	21
'You are excited about your future.'			
Agree strongly	25	45	39
Agree	52	35	40

Figures are based on 1,017 interviews conducted in March 1989.

VII. Religion, the Life Cycle, and Youth

The Life Cycle
Teen-Agers
College Students

Religion and The Life Cycle

Religious Involvement Related To Stages of Life

There is a significant correlation between people's religious involvement and their stage in the life cycle, especially with regard to age and marital status.

Religious education begins with childhood, and there are clear patterns of which parents are more likely to provide such training for their children. Several groups of parents are significantly less likely than others to provide religious training — single parents, divorced parents, widowed parents, and spouses with different religious affiliations from each other.

In the latter case, disagreement over how to educate the children, relative lack of interest in religion and churches' lack of support for mixed marriages may be factors.

In the case of single parents, however, there is a large gap between those who say they want to provide religious education for their children and those who actually provide that training. This suggests that singleness itself is a negative factor — probably because the increased demands made on single parents make it more difficult for them to meet all of their children's needs, including religious education.

Despite the fact that most teen-agers receive some form of religious education, teens are less likely than adults to say that religion is "very important" in their lives; young people, coming to terms with so much of life, tend to be less interested in religion.

This pattern becomes clearer when we see that those 18 to 24 are the most likely age group to say they have no religious affiliation and that they are generally the least religiously active group in the nation. As young people leave home and begin establishing their own lives, they frequently leave religion behind.

But that does not last forever. Young people start returning to church by age 25. This is particularly true for those who get married; the married are considerably more active religiously than singles. The exceptions are those in religiously mixed marriages; there is no significant difference in church membership and attendance or belief that religion is "very important" between singles and those in mixed marriages.

Religious involvement escalates again with parenthood; couples under 40 who have children are considerably more likely than couples the same age with no children to attend church frequently.

In general, religious interest and activity increases with age, although it increases much more for women than for men. The way a marriage ends is important to a person's religious life. If it ends in divorce, religious interest and activity decrease; if it ends in widowhood, they increase.

These figures illustrate the "life-cycle effect."

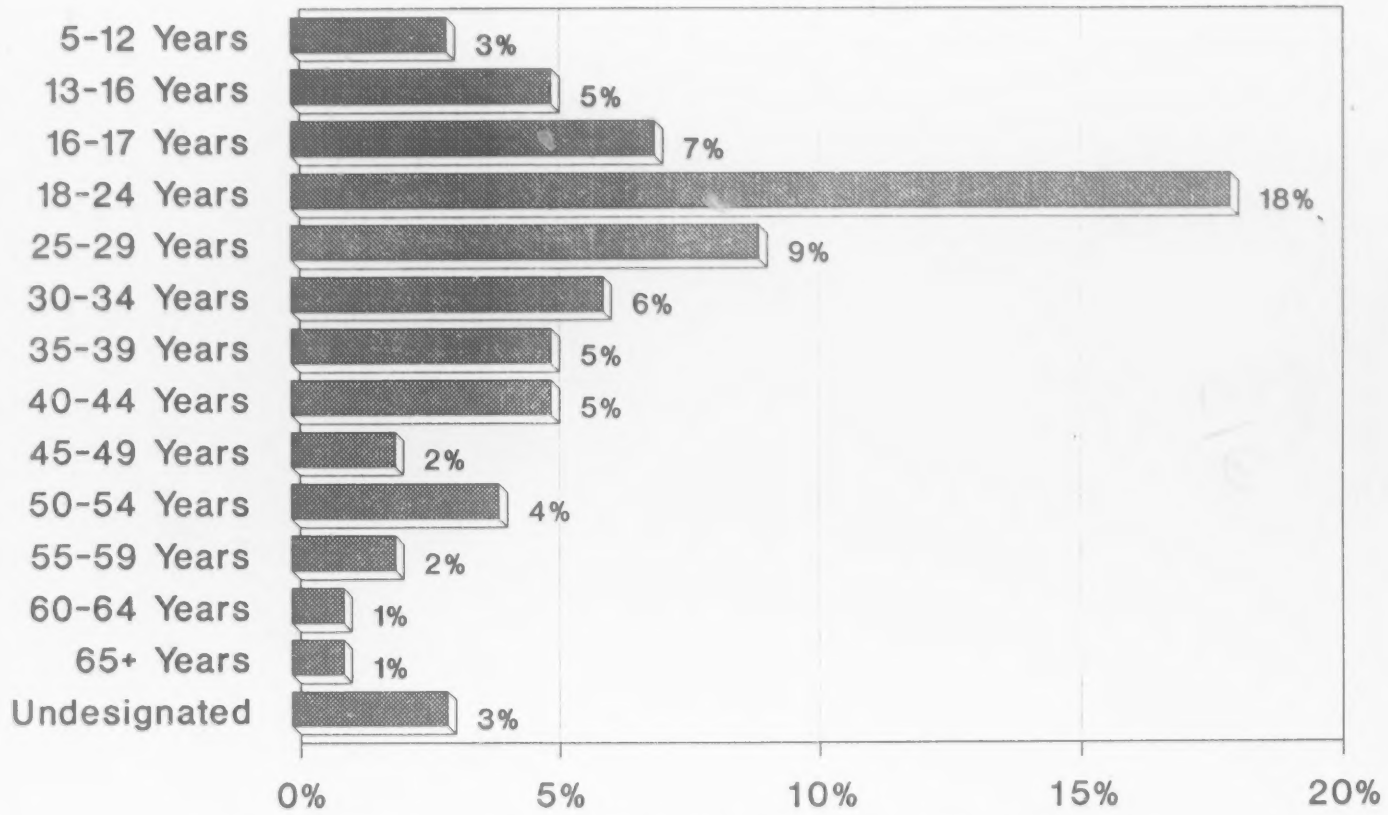
- Twenty-eight percent of single adults, 42 percent of those who are married, 27 percent of the divorced and 49 percent of the widowed say they attended church or synagogue in the past week.
- Sixty-one percent of those in same-faith marriages but only 42 percent of those in religiously mixed marriages say religion is "very important" in their lives.
- Ninety percent of all parents of children ages 4-18 say they want religious training for their children, but only 69 percent are providing such training. Among single parents of children in this age group, 78 percent say they want religious training for their children and 54 percent are providing it. Eighty-nine percent of parents who are divorced, separated, or widowed want religious training for their children, but only 59 percent are providing it.
- Religious leaders who wish to reach out to people need to understand the "Religious Life Cycle"; they can be most effective by gearing programs to people at key points in the cycle. One of the most productive steps — in terms of helping people retain church involvement — would be providing help for single parents, particularly those who are divorced or widowed.

Importance Of The Belief That Life Is Meaningful

How important to you is the belief that your life is meaningful or has a purpose?

	Proportion Reporting A . . .		
	Great deal of faith at age 16	Great deal of faith currently	Difference in percentage points
National	17%	29%	+12
Men	15	26	+11
Women	19	32	+13
Whites	17	27	+10
Non-whites	20	42	+22
Under 30 years	12	19	+ 7
30-39 years	12	21	+ 9
40-49 years	19	34	+15
50 & older	22	40	+18
College graduates	16	22	+ 6
College incomplete	15	25	+10
High school graduates	18	28	+10
Less than high school graduates	18	44	+16
$40,000 & over	17	24	+ 7
$30,000-$39,999	15	20	+ 5
$20,000-$29,999	13	23	+10
$10,000-$19,999	19	31	+12
Under $10,000	17	37	+20
Church member	17	35	+18
More active	11	34	+23
Less active	20	33	+13
No change	26	40	+14
Non-member	19	22	+ 3
Less active	21	22	+ 1
No change	21	17	− 4
Importance of religion			
Very important	23	46	+23
Fairly important	10	12	+ 2
Not important	15	12	− 3

AGE AT WHICH FAITH CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY



BASED ON 71% WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED CHANGE

Teens Sustain Religious Beliefs

The vast majority of America's teens (95%) in 1989 said they believe in God or a universal spirit. Their level of belief is statistically unchanged since 1985 when 96 percent expressed similar beliefs.

About three teens in four (77%) added that they believe this God is a personal God who observes their actions and who rewards or punishes them for their deeds. The proportion holding this belief in 1985 was about the same (75%).

In a 1988 Gallup Youth Survey, 88% of the teens said they believe in angels. Far fewer, but still a high proportion, expressed belief in either witches (29%) or ghosts (22%).

Two teens in three (65%) in 1989 said they thought there would be a life after death. The level of this belief, too, was unchanged, with 66% expressing similar thoughts in 1985. Belief in the concept of reincarnation or the rebirth of the soul in a new body after death, however, was accepted by three teens in 10 (31%).

Rise in Attendance

Attendance of religious services by teen-agers rose during 1989 in comparison to recent years. A majority of teens (57%) surveyed through 1989 reported they attended church or synagogue services during the seven-day period preceding the interview. Church attendance by teens was particularly high in the South where two teens in three (67%) attended. Also showing above-average rates of attendance were young women (61%), teens who are non-white (62%), and those who come from white-collar households (60%).

By preference, 52% of the teens named one of the Protestant denominations, while 32% identified themselves as being Roman Catholics.

In 1987, eight teens in 10 affirmed that their religious beliefs are important to them, with 39% saying they are "very important" and 41% "fairly important." In comparison to their parents, however, half of the teens (49%) said their beliefs were less important. Among the remaining teens, a minority of 26% thought they attached more importance to religion than their parents did, while 24% said they and their parents were about equal in this respect.

Religious Beliefs of Teens

	1989			
	God	Personal God	Life after death	Reincarnation
NATIONAL	**95%**	**77%**	**65%**	**31%**
Male	93	76	70	32
Female	97	80	60	30
Ages 13 to 15	95	77	64	32
Ages 16 to 17	95	77	67	29
Above-average students	94	76	63	25
Average or below	97	78	67	39
Protestant	98	83	64	28
Catholic	99	76	64	32
Attend church regularly	99	84	67	29
Do not attend regularly	89	75	63	32
East	93	72	68	36
Midwest	95	78	64	26
South	98	84	60	30
West	92	76	70	30

Religion Profile of Teens

	1989		
	Protestant	Catholic	Attended church last week
NATIONAL	**52%**	**32%**	**57%**
Male	48	33	52
Female	55	31	61
Ages 13 to 15	50	34	62
Ages 16 to 17	54	30	50
Whites	49	33	55
Non-whites	64	28	62
White-collar family background	48	35	60
Blue-collar family background	56	30	51
East	40	42	52
Midwest	49	40	55
South	72	18	67
West	36	33	45
Central cities	49	36	59
Suburbs	49	32	55
Non-metropolitan areas	60	27	56

School Prayer

	Favor	Oppose	No opinion
1987	55%	31%	14%
1985	60	31	9
1981	45	43	12

Beliefs Are Strong, But Practices Sometimes Are Weak

Nine in 10 college students (89%) in a 1988 Princeton Religion Research Center survey said they believe in God or a universal spirit. Only 6% did not believe that God exists, and 5% were uncertain about his existence. The proportion of college students believing in God has been constant since 1975.

Three undergraduates in four (77%) believed that Jesus Christ either was God or the son of God. To 13% of the students, he is considered to have been just another religious leader like Mohammed or Buddha, but not divine. Only 2% of the students doubted that Jesus ever lived, but 8% said they are uncertain about the facts of his existence or divinity.

A majority of undergraduate college students (55%) said that their religious beliefs are very important to them. An additional 30% said their beliefs are somewhat important, but 11% asserted they are not important, and 5% stated they either have no beliefs or could not state their importance.

Half of the students (50%) said there was no change in their level of religious commitment since they entered college. The remaining students were divided, with a slight edge going to those who reported their commitment had become stronger, compared to those for whom it had become weaker. One undergraduate in 10 (10%) said his commitment was much stronger since entering college, and 17% reported it was a little stronger. Among those whose commitment diminished, 16% said it was a little weaker, and 6% that it was much weaker.

Membership in a church or synagogue was claimed by two undergraduates in three (67%). Only one student in eight (12%), however, reported membership in an on-campus religious organization or fellowship.

While at college, one student in three (34%) reported attending religious services at least weekly. An additional 18% said they attend about monthly, but 25% attend only sporadically through the year, and 23% said they almost never attend worship services.

Belief in God

	Believe	Do not believe	Not sure
1988	89%	6%	5%
1983	91	5	4
1975	89	7	4

Religious Commitment Since Entering College

Question: *Since you have been in college, has your religious commitment become much stronger, a little stronger, a little weaker, much weaker, or has there been no change?*

	1988			
	Stronger	No change	Weaker	Number of interviews
Total undergraduates	**27%**	**50%**	**23%**	**545**
Sex				
Male	23	52	25	285
Female	32	48	20	285
Class				
Lowerclassmen	28	51	22	278
Upperclassmen	26	48	26	267
Grade point average				
A	28	59	13	77
B	25	51	24	324
C	35	40	25	111
Region				
East	23	53	24	152
Midwest	29	47	24	152
South	28	49	23	154
West	29	51	20	87
Religious affiliation				
Protestant	33	42	25	267
Catholic	21	53	26	158

Importance of Religious Beliefs

Question: *How important to you are your religious beliefs: very important, fairly important, not too important, not at all important?*

	1988			
	Very important	Fairly important	Not important	Number of interviews
Total undergraduates	**55%**	**30%**	**11%**	**545**
Sex				
Male	44	35	15	285
Female	66	24	6	260
Class				
Lowerclassmen	55	30	10	278
Upperclassmen	54	30	12	267
Grade point average				
A	58	19	14	77
B	54	31	11	324
C	55	33	8	111
Region				
East	42	37	14	152
Midwest	58	29	11	152
South	65	25	7	154
West	54	27	12	87
Religious Affiliation				
Protestant	65	27	7	267
Catholic	52	40	8	158

No opinion, no beliefs (4%, total) omitted.

Frequency of Attending Religious Services

Question: *How often do you attend religious services?*

	1988				
	Weekly	About monthly	Few times a year	Almost never	Number of interviews
Total undergraduates	**34%**	**18%**	**25%**	**23%**	**545**
Sex					
Male	30	16	25	29	285
Female	39	20	24	17	260
Class					
Lowerclassmen	36	18	24	22	278
Upperclassmen	30	18	27	25	267
Grade point average					
A	43	8	20	29	77
B	32	20	27	21	324
C	35	21	18	26	111
Region					
East	24	18	34	24	152
Midwest	40	20	20	20	154
South	43	21	18	18	154
West	27	10	27	36	87
Religious affiliation					
Protestant	40	24	20	16	267
Catholic	37	18	31	14	158

Religious Affiliations

Question: *Do you belong to or participate in the activities of a college organization associated with a religious denomination, such as Newman, Hillel, or Wesley?*

Are you a member of a church or synagogue?

	1988		
	Campus religious group member	Church/Synagogue member	Number of interviews
Total undergraduates	**12%**	**67%**	**545**
Sex			
Male	10	62	285
Female	13	72	260
Class			
Lowerclassmen	12	68	278
Upperclassmen	12	65	267
Grade point average			
A	14	64	77
B	10	66	77
C	10	65	111
Region			
East	12	64	152
Midwest	17	72	152
South	9	76	154
West	8	49	87
Religious Affiliation			
Protestant	14	77	267
Catholic	11	80	158

Belief in God

Question: *Do you believe in God or a universal spirit?*

1988

	Yes	No	Not sure	Number of interviews
Total undergraduates	89%	6%	5%	545
Sex				
Male	85	9	6	285
Female	93	2	5	260
Class				
Upperclassmen	99	5	7	278
Lowerclassmen	89	6	5	267
Grade-point average				
A	83	11	6	77
B	88	5	7	324
C	92	5	3	111
Region				
East	84	8	8	152
Midwest	91	4	5	152
South	96	3	1	154
West	82	8	10	87
Denomination				
Protestant	95	2	3	267
Catholic	95	2	3	158

Belief in the Divinity of Christ

Question: *What do you believe about Jesus Christ: do you think Jesus Christ was God or the Son of God, another leader like Mohammed or Buddha, or do you think Jesus Christ never actually lived?*

1988

	God or son of God	Another religious leader	Never lived	Number of interviews
Total undergraduates	77%	13%	2%	545
Sex				
Male	71	16	2	285
Female	82	9	2	260
Class				
Upperclassmen	71	20	*	278
Lowerclassmen	79	9	2	267
Grade-point average				
A	63	21	2	77
B	76	12	2	324
C	83	8	3	111
Region				
East	67	18	4	152
Midwest	84	8	2	152
South	84	11	—	154
West	68	13	3	87
Denomination				
Protestant	89	5	*	267
Catholic	91	3	2	158

*Less than one-half of one percent.

VIII. Methodology

Design of the Samples
Sampling Tolerances
Gallup Poll Accuracy Record

Methodology

Design of the Sample for Personal Surveys

The design of the sample for personal (face-to-face) surveys is that of a replicated area probability sample down to the block level in the case of urban areas and to segments of townships in the case of rural areas.

After stratifying the nation geographically and by size of community according to information derived from the most recent census, over 350 different sampling locations are selected on a mathematically random basis from within cities, towns, and counties that have in turn been selected on a mathematically random basis.

The interviewers are given no leeway in selecting the areas in which they are to conduct their interviews. Each interviewer is given a map on which a specific starting point is marked, and is instructed to contact households according to a predetermined travel pattern. At each occupied dwelling unit, the interviewer selects respondents by following a systematic procedure. This procedure is repeated until the assigned number of interviews has been completed.

Design of the Sample for Telephone Surveys

The national Gallup telephone samples are based on the area probability sample used for personal surveys.

In each of the sampling locations selected (as described in the "Design of the Sample for Personal Surveys" section above), a set of telephone exchanges that falls within the geographic boundaries of the sampling location is first identified. Listed telephone numbers in these exchanges are selected randomly and used as "seed numbers" for randomly generating telephone numbers. The result of this procedure is a sample of listed and unlisted telephone numbers assigned to households within telephone exchanges serving our sampling locations. The final sample of numbers thus reflects the stratification and selection of sampling locations that provide confidence in the representativeness of our area probability sample.

After the survey data have been collected and processed, each respondent is assigned a weight so that the demographic characteristics of the total weighted sample of respondents matches the latest estimates of the demographic characteristics of the appropriate adult population available from the U.S. Census Bureau. Telephone surveys are weighted to match the characteristics of the adult population living in households, with access to a telephone. The weighting of personal interview data includes a factor to improve the representation of the kinds of people who are less likely to be found at home.

The procedures described above are designed to produce samples approximating the adult civilian population (18 and older) living in private households (that is, excluding those in prisons, hospitals, hotels, religious and educational institutions, and those living on reservations or military bases) — and in the case of telephone surveys, households wih access to a telephone. Survey percentages may be applied to census estimates of the size of these populations to project percentages into numbers of people. The manner in which the sample is drawn also produces a sample which approximates the distribution of private households in the United States; therefore, survey results can also be projected to numbers of households.

Sampling Tolerances

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, that is, the extent to which the results may differ from those that would be obtained if the whole population surveyed had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends largely on the number of interviews.

The table on the following page may be used in estimating sampling error. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary, 95 percent of the time, assuming the same sampling procedure, the same interviewers, and the same questionnaire were used.

Table A shows the allowances that should be made for the sampling error of a percentage.

The table should be used as follows: Say a reported percentage is 33 for a group which includes 1,500 respondents. Go to the row labeled "percentages near 30" and then to the column headed "1500." The number at this point is 3, which means that the 33 percent obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3 points. Another way of saying it is that very probably (95 times out of 100) the average of repeated samplings would be somewhere between 30 and 36, with the most likely figure the 33 obtained.

In comparing survey results in two sub-samples, such as men and women, the question arises as to how large a difference between them must be before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. In Tables B and C, the number of points which must be allowed for in such comparisons is indicated.

For percentages near 20 or 80, use Table B, for those near 50, Table C. For percentages in between, the error factor is between that shown in the two tables.

Here is an example of how the tables should be used: Say 50 percent of men and 40 percent of women respond the same way to a question, a difference of 10 percentage points. Can it be said with any assurance that the 10-point difference reflects a real difference between men and women on the question? Let us suppose that the sample contains 750 men and 750 women.

Because the percentages are near 50, consult Table C. Since the two slamples are about 750 persons each, look for the place in the table where the column and row labeled "750" converge. The number seven appears there. This means the allowance for error should be seven points, and the conclusion that the percentage among men is somewhere between 3 and 17 points higher than the percentage among women would be wrong only about 5 percent of the time. In other words, there is a considerable likelihood that a different exists in the direction observed and that it amounts to at least 3 percentage points.

If, in another case, 22 percent of male respondents answer a question in a particular way, compared to 24 percent of female respondents, consult Table B because these percentages are near 20. The column and row labeled "750" converge on the number 5. Obviously then, the 2-point difference is inconclusive.

TABLE A — **Allowance for Sampling Error of a Percentage**

In Percentage Points (at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

	Size of Sample						
	1500	1000	750	600	400	200	150
Percentages near 10	2	2	3	3	3	5	8
Percentages near 20	3	3	4	4	5	7	10
Percentages near 30	3	4	4	5	6	8	12
Percentages near 40	3	4	5	5	6	9	12
Percentages near 50	3	4	5	5	6	9	13
Percentages near 60	3	4	5	5	6	9	12
Percentages near 70	3	4	4	5	6	8	12
Percentages near 80	3	3	4	4	5	7	10
Percentages near 90	2	2	3	3	4	5	8

TABLE B — **Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference**

In Percentage Points (at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

Percentages near 20 or percentages near 80

Size of the Sample	750	600	40	200
750	5			
600	6	6		
400	6	7	7	
200	8	8	9	10

TABLE C — **Percentages near 50**

Size of the Sample				
750	7			
600	7	7		
400	8	9	9	
200	10	10	11	13

*The chances are 95 in 100 that the sampling error is ot larger than the figures shown.

Gallup Poll Accuracy Record

Year	Gallup Final Survey		Election Results		Deviation
1988	56.0%	Bush	53.9%	Bush	−2.1
1984	59.0	Reagan	59.2	Reagan	−0.2
1982	55.0	Democratic	56.1	Democratic	−1.1
1980	47.0	Reagan	50.8	Reagan	−3.8
1978	55.0	Democratic	54.6	Democratic	+0.4
1976	48.0	Carter	50.0	Carter	−2.0
1974	60.0	Democratic	58.9	Democratic	+1.1
1972	62.0	Nixon	61.8	Nixon	+0.2
1970	53.0	Democratic	54.3	Democratic	−1.3
1968	43.0	Nixon	43.5	Nixon	−0.5
1966	52.5	Democratic	51.9	Democratic	+0.6
1964	64.0	Johnson	61.3	Johnson	+2.7
1962	55.5	Democratic	52.7	Democratic	+2.8
1960	51.0	Kennedy	50.1	Kennedy	+0.9
1958	57.0	Democratic	56.5	Democratic	+0.5
1956	59.5	Eisenhower	57.8	Eisenhower	+1.7
1954	51.5	Democratic	52.7	Democratic	−1.2
1952	51.0	Eisenhower	55.4	Eisenhower	−4.4
1950	51.0	Democratic	50.3	Democratic	+0.7
1948	44.5	Truman	49.9	Truman	−5.4
1946	58.0	Republican	54.3	Republican	+3.7
1944	51.5	Roosevelt	53.3	Roosevelt	−1.8
1942	52.0	Democratic	48.0	Democratic	+4.0
1940	52.0	Roosevelt	55.0	Roosevelt	−3.0
1938	54.0	Democratic	50.8	Democratic	+3.2
1936	55.7	Roosevelt	62.5	Roosevelt	−6.8

Average deviation for 26 national elections:
2.2 percentage points

Average deviation for 19 national elections since 1950, inclusive:
1.5 percentage points

Trends in Deviation

Elections	Average error
1936-1950	3.6
1952-1960	1.7
1962-1970	1.6
1972-1988	1.4

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NEWSLETTER

Emerging Trends -- Commentary on surveys on religious beliefs and practices; 10 issues a year; annual subscription rate is $35 domestic, $45 foreign.

PRESS RELEASES

The Gallup Religion Poll — Weekly syndicated column by George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli — Subscription information can be obtained through the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. Telephone (213) 972-5121.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Religion in America 1990 -- Annual report on religious beliefs and practices, and predictions for the 1990's. Cost per copy is $30. Back issues are available for $10.00.

The Unchurched American — Factors that cause people to leave the church, and those that cause them to return. Cost per copy is $29.00.

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100 Questions and Answers: Religion in America — by George Gallup, Jr. and Sarah Jones. A single-volume compendium of the 100 most important questions we have surveyed in the area of religion. A handy reference tool in book size format that both categorizes and analyzes key survey data. Price per copy is $30.

BOOKS

My Kid on Drugs? — George Gallup, Jr. with Art Linkletter (Standard Publishing).

America's Search for Faith — By George Gallup, Jr. and David Poling (Abingdon Press).

Adventures in Immortality — By George Gallup, Jr. with William Proctor (McGraw-Hill Book Company).

Forecast 2000 — By George Gallup, Jr. with William Proctor. (William Morrow Inc).

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The American Catholic — By George Gallup, Jr. with Jim Castelli (Doubleday).

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